Volume Forty-eight, Number Six, December 1969

Commentary

Socialism and the Future
by Robert L. Heilbroner

The End of Culture
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Hebrew As She Is Spoke
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A Story
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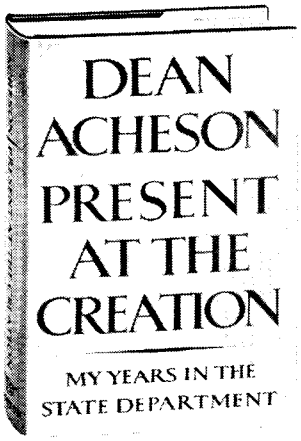

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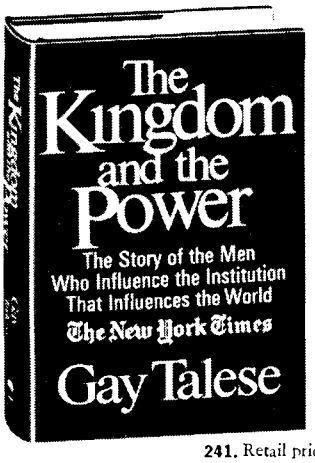
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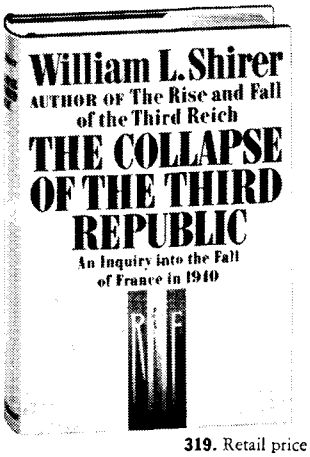
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Letters from Readers

Truman's Speech & Noam Chomsky

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There are familiar forms of self-righteousness in which people become so suffused with the virtue of their cause that they cease to care about intellectual honesty. Dr. Chomsky, I fear, has succumbed to this malady of moralism. "It is the responsibility of intellectuals," he wrote in his most celebrated essay, "to speak the truth and to expose lies." Having said this, he seems to feel licensed to forget or distort the truth whenever it suits his polemical convenience. He begins as a preacher to the world and ends as an intellectual crook.

Since Dr. Chomsky unwisely continues to labor the point, let us go on with the example he raised in his sermon in the October COMMENTARY ["Vietnam, the Cold War & Other Matters"]: the nature of the speech Harry S. Truman gave at Baylor University in Texas on March 6, 1947. In *American Power and the New Mandarins* Dr. Chomsky twice (pp. 268, 319) printed a series of what he represented as direct quotations from what he called this "famous and important" speech: "All freedom is dependent on freedom of enterprise. . . . The whole world should adopt the American system. . . . The American system can survive in America only if it becomes a world system." The purpose of these Truman "quotations" was to prove that the United States had long been "using its awesome resources of violence and devastation to impose its passionately held ideology and its approved form of social organization on large areas of the world" (p. 318).

Of course President Truman never spoke the words thus attributed to him, and reviewers quickly caught Dr. Chomsky out in his scholarly fakery. But this exposure has evidently not perturbed Dr. Chomsky in the slightest. He now concedes that he lifted his "quotations" from D. F. Fleming and J. P. Warburg; but he still insists that they are "accurate and perceptive" paraphrases of the Baylor speech, that they "convey the essence of Truman's remarks." The Baylor speech still seems to him dramatic proof of the American drive for world economic empire.

What, in fact, did President Truman say at Baylor? The speech is readily available in the volume of his *Public Papers* for 1947, pages 167-172. Anyone interested in testing Dr. Chomsky's capacity for intellectual honesty should examine the full text. Far from a Presidential response to the expansionist demands of American capitalism, the speech is an earnest plea to the American business community not to return to its economic nationalism of the days before the Second World War. Its specific objective is to persuade American businessmen that they will not suffer from the reduction of trade barriers and, in particular, that they should support American membership in the International Trade Organization, then in process of formation. It is all a quite conventional and even routine argument in the spirit of Cordell Hull, Will Clayton, and the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act for economic multilateralism and a freely trading world.

Truman began with a statement of his theme:

> The three—peace, freedom, and world trade—are inseparable. The grave lessons of the past have proved it. . . . We know today that we cannot find security in isolation. If we are to live at peace, we must join with other nations in a continuing effort to organize the world for peace. . . . Our foreign relations, political and economic, are indivisible. We cannot say that we are willing to cooperate in the one field and are unwilling to cooperate in the other.

He reminded his audience of the dangers of economic nationalism and of consequent economic conflict:

> One nation may take action in behalf of its own producers, without notifying other nations, or consulting them, or even considering how they may be affected. It may cut down its purchases of another country's goods, by raising its tariffs or imposing an embargo or a system of quota on imports. And when

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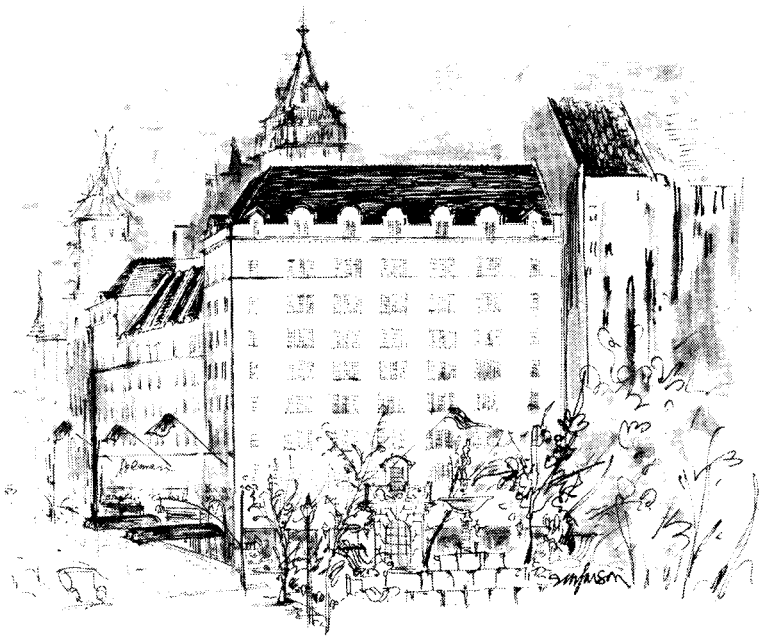

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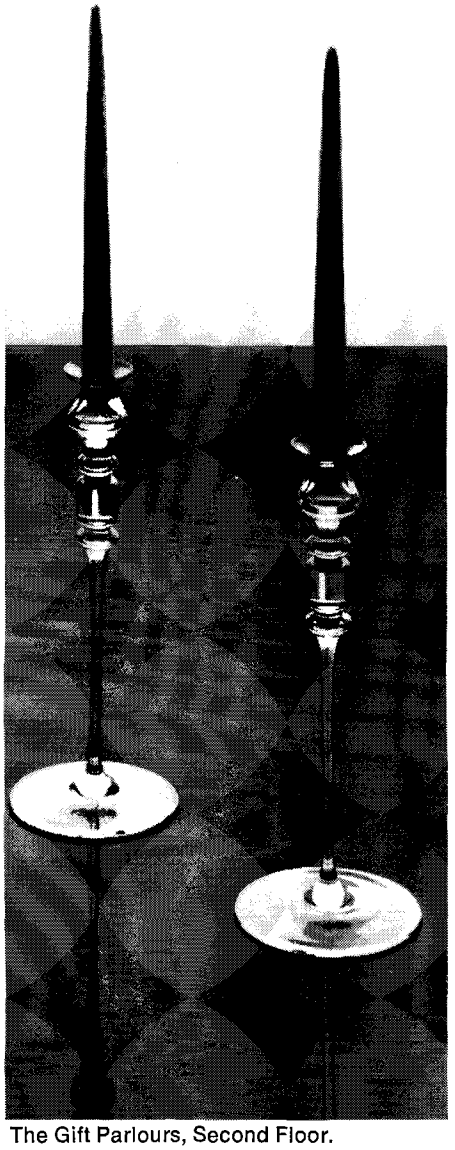

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it does this, some producer, in the other country, will find the door to his market suddenly slammed and bolted in his face. Or a nation may subsidize its exports, selling its goods abroad below their cost. When this is done, a producer in some other country will find his market flooded with goods that have been dumped. In either case, the producer gets angry. . . .

He appeals to his government for action. His government retaliates, and another round of tariff boosts, embargoes, quotas, and subsidies is under way. This is economic war. In such a war nobody wins. . . . As each battle of the economic war of the thirties was fought, the inevitable tragic result became more and more apparent. From the tariff policy of Hawley and Smoot, the world went on to Ottawa and the system of imperial preferences, from Ottawa to the kind of elaborate and detailed restrictions adopted by Nazi Germany.

Truman then contended that the world had reached another turning-point like 1920, when it could move either toward economic nationalism or toward economic internationalism.

> In this atmosphere of doubt and hesitation, the decisive factor will be the type of leadership that the United States gives the world. We are the giant of the economic world. Whether we like it or not, the future pattern of economic relations depends upon us. The world is waiting and watching to see what we shall do. The choice is ours. We can lead the nations to economic peace or we can plunge them into economic war. There must be no question as to our course. We must not go through the thirties again.

Next, in the policy section of the speech, he advocated American participation in a projected new organization to be established within the United Nations: the International Trade Organization.

> This organization would apply to commercial relationships the same principle of fair dealing that the United Nations is applying to political affairs. Instead of retaining unlimited freedom to commit acts of economic aggression, its members would adopt a code of economic conduct and agree to live according to its rules. Instead of adopting measures that might be harmful to others, without warning and without consultation, countries would sit down around the table and talk things out. In any dispute, each party would present its case. The interest of all would be considered, and a fair and just solution would be found. . . . If the nations can agree to observe a code of good conduct in international trade, they will cooperate more readily in other international affairs. Such agreement will prevent the bitterness that is engendered by an economic war. It will provide an atmosphere congenial to the preservation of peace. As a part of this program we have asked other nations of the world to join with us in reducing barriers to trade.

With this last proposal, Truman was entering the hard part of his argument; for then, as now, the idea of reducing trade barriers struck terror through large segments of the American business community. The rest of his speech was designed to persuade businessmen that such reduction would be in their long-term interest:

> There is one thing that Americans value even more than peace. It is freedom. Freedom of worship—freedom of speech—freedom of enterprise. It must be true that the first two of these freedoms are related to the third. For, throughout history, freedom of worship and freedom of speech have been most frequently enjoyed in those societies that have accorded a considerable measure of freedom to individual enterprise. Freedom has flourished where power has been dispersed. It has languished where power has been too highly centralized. So our devotion to freedom of enterprise, in the United States, has deeper roots than a desire to protect the profits of ownership.

He warned the American business community that, if the world moved toward economic nationalism, the United States would be forced to intensify government controls over business.

> The pattern of international trade that is most conducive to freedom of enterprise is one in which the major decisions are made, not by governments, but

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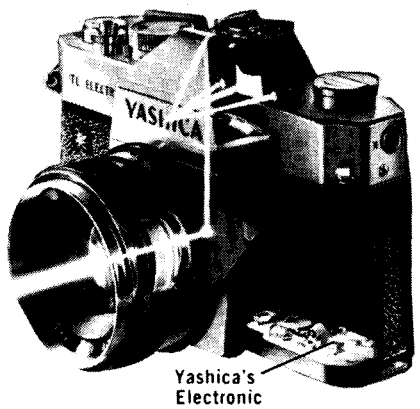

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by private buyers and sellers, under conditions of active competition, and with proper safeguards against the establishment of monopolies and cartels. . . . If this trend [toward economic nationalism] is not reversed, the Government of the United States will be under pressure, sooner or later, to use these same devices to fight for markets and for raw materials. And if the Government were to yield to this pressure, it would shortly find itself in the business of allocating foreign goods among importers and foreign markets among exporters and telling every trader what he could buy or sell, and how much, and when, and where. . . .

Fortunately, an alternative has been offered to the world in the Charter of the International Trade Organization that is to be considered at Geneva in the coming month. . . . This program is designed to restore and preserve a trading system that is consistent with continuing freedom of enterprise in every country that chooses freedom for its own economy.

He went on to explain that American business would have to make certain sacrifices if it hopes to enjoy the benefits of a freely trading world.

If these negotiations are to be successful, we ourselves must make the same commitments that we ask all other nations of the world to make. We must be prepared to make concessions if we are to obtain concessions from others in return. . . . The program . . . means that exports will be larger. It also means that imports will be larger. Many people, it is true, are afraid of imports. . . . I said to the Congress, when it last considered the extension of the Trade Agreements Act, and I now reiterate, that domestic interests will be safeguarded in this process of expanding trade. But there still are those who sincerely fear that the trade agreement negotiations will prove disastrous to the interests of particular producing groups. I am sure that their misgivings are not well founded.

He concluded with a summation:

The policy of reducing barriers to trade is a settled policy of this Government. It is embodied in the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, fathered and administered for many years by Cordell Hull. It is reflected in the Charter of the International Trade Organization. . . . [To] those among us—and there are still a few—who would seek to undermine this policy for partisan advantage and go back to the period of high tariffs and economic isolation, I can only say this: Times have changed. Our position in the world has changed. . . . Isolationism, after two world wars, is a confession of mental and moral bankruptcy.

Several things can be said about this speech. It embodies, of course, a shallow interpretation of world events. Few today accept the Cordell Hull theory that economic nationalism was the main cause of the Second World War, or that economic internationalism offers a sure way to peace. Many of us have come to doubt the automatic value of the reduction of trade barriers in all places and all circumstances. The special needs of economic development, for example, may well argue for non-reciprocal tariff concessions to developing countries in order to give their manufactures preferential treatment as well as for controls by such countries to regulate the use of their own foreign-exchange earnings and to limit the repatriation of profits to other countries.

Yet saying these things hardly makes the Truman speech, as Dr. Chomsky implies, the great war-cry of a rampant American imperialism mobilizing its resources of violence and devastation to impose its ideology and its economic organization on large areas of the world. The ideological passage, for example, is hardly so ferocious as Dr. Chomsky claims. Indeed, it is characteristic of Dr. Chomsky's unbeatable instinct for distortion that he can write in the October COMMENTARY: "Truman argued that freedom of enterprise is one of those freedoms to be valued 'even more than peace.'" What Truman actually said, as the reader will have observed, was that Americans valued *freedom* even more than peace, and he made it clear that he meant above all intellectual and religious freedom. His sentence relating freedom of speech and freedom of worship to freedom of enterprise is moderately stated and historically defensi-

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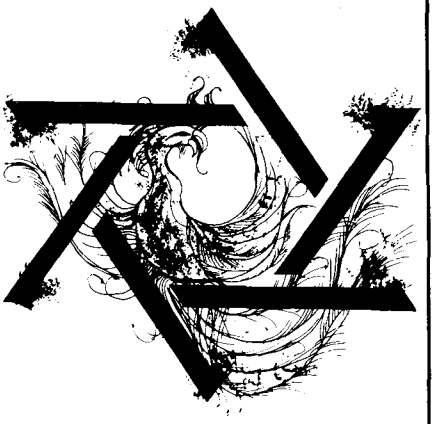

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by KA-TZETNIK 135633
author of HOUSE OF DOLLS

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ble. Does Dr. Chomsky really quarrel with such platitudes as "Freedom has flourished where power has been dispersed. It has languished where power has been too highly centralized"?

But the most perplexing thing of all is why Dr. Chomsky gets so excited over the prospect of America's joining the International Trade Organization, which after all was the point of the Truman speech. Why does he regard the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act as so sinister and vicious an arrangement? (This extravagant reaction to innocuous phenomena is typical of Dr. Chomsky; recall his statement in *American Power and the New Mandarins* that Senator Mike Mansfield—*Mike Mansfield!*—is "the kind of man who is the terror of our age.") And why does he suppose that the ITO and the Trade Argeements Act express the imperialist will of the American business system?

He does all these things, I guess, because he is an ignorant man who has read superficially in American history and has taken from Professor William Appleman Williams and his disciples the notion that the policy of the open door—i.e., of economic multilateralism—has been the chosen instrument of American business in its presumed quest for world economic domination. Of course, as any freshman knows, American business and its political representatives have been characteristically protectionist rather than multilateralist on questions of international trade. Herbert Hoover condemned the reciprocal trade idea in 1932 as "a violation of American principles." When the trade agreements bill passed the Congress in 1934, only two representatives of the party of business voted for it in the House and only three in the Senate. Dr. Chomsky's uncritical adoption of the Williams thesis requires him to believe (as his footnote on the Far Eastern policy of the 30's makes evident) that, in his conduct of foreign policy, Franklin Roosevelt was striving to serve the very moneyed interests who were fighting him so savagely in domestic politics. Does not this proposition strain even Dr. Chomsky's limitless credulity?

I continue to believe that Dr. Chomsky is putting us on. If he really regards the Trade Agreements Act and the ITO as so iniquitous—as expressions of an American determination to use "its awesome resources of violence and devastation," etc.—how does he propose that international trade should be organized? Does he want the United States to repeal the Trade Agreements Act and to resign from the ITO? If economic multilateralism is so horrible, does Dr. Chomsky favor economic nationalism? If a freely trading world is such a bad thing, does he want bilateralism? managed trading? autarky?

One's suspicion is that Dr. Chomsky has no idea what he is talking about. As his persistence in the distortion of the Truman speech shows him an intellectual crook, so his refusal to confront, or even acknowledge, the serious issues involved in Truman's support of the ITO in this "famous and important" speech shows him an intellectual phoney.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.
New York City

[*Professor Chomsky's reply will appear in a future issue*—ED.]

Antigone & the New Left

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In an inevitable reevaluation of the 1950's ["In Defense of the 50's," September], John Mander states: "It was the happiest, most stable, most rational period the Western world has known since 1914." Mr. Mander is writing as a white, prosperous, moderately Left Englishman. But the 50's was the decade of Little Rock and the acquittal of Emmett Till's murderers; of poverty, before Michael Harrington roused the conscience of America; of "Communist" witch hunts. For the non-white, the poor or underprivileged, the radicals, or those stalked as radicals, it was not happy; stability meant stagnation, and the demagoguery of McCarthy was irrational.

Indeed, Mr. Mander's whole article is an attempt to cling to the spar of Western, over-thirty happiness and stability. Talking about colonial wars, Mr. Mander says: "In each case a compromise was eventually struck: unsatisfactory to the Dutch and the French, rather more satisfactory to the British." But were the compromises satisfactory to the people fighting for their freedom? Should there even be a compromise between liberation and colonialism?

John Mander accuses Fanon,

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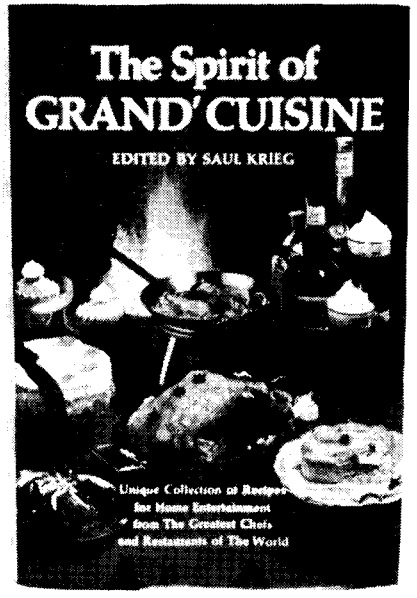

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and by implication the under-thirties, of glorification of violence. But is the man who is fighting for his freedom more violent than the man who is suppressing him? (I am sure that Mr. Mander would not say that the Hungarians in 1956 were more violent than the Russians.) Are the draft resisters and pacifists more violent than those who stockpile herbicides, gases, bombs, and missiles?

Despite his disclaimer, "I do not think we were smug," Mr. Mander seems to think that he and his generation have a special fief on truth and perspective: ". . . the true history of the 50's is now as distant to today's under-thirties as was the long summer afternoon of the Edwardian peace to those of us who grew up in the 50's"; ". . . a difference between the generations of '49 and '69 that is fundamental: I mean the presence, and the lack, of a sense of historical perspective." But truth and perspective are not the same for everyone. History for many young people is not just European history, but includes the perspective of the wretched of the earth and the invisible men, for whom Mr. Mander's article is largely irrelevant. In 1969 there is a new way of looking at the world, the whole world, not just Europe. . . .

Mr. Mander's own sense of history is conveniently selective: "Governing men of another color (or your own) against their will is not to be advised: liberating those governed unwillingly liberates their governors as well. These simple, almost banal truths are to be found in the *philosophes*, in Jefferson. . . ." On page 27 of the same issue of COMMENTARY, Theodore Draper quotes Jefferson: "The blacks . . . are inferior to the whites in the endowments of both body and mind." Mr. Draper adds: "Jefferson freed only a few of his over a hundred slaves because he felt that his financial obligations took precedence." A rational, stable, and—for Jefferson—a happy decision, but for the slaves?

ANTHEA MANDER LAHR
New York City

MR. MANDER writes:

Mrs. Anthea Mander Lahr makes many good points at my expense—though some of them were hinted at, I think, in the original article, "In Defense of the 50's." On some points we disagree; on others I think we are more in agreement than she would allow. In particular, our concern with the Third World (a term still unknown in 1950) has far more in common, I am convinced, than she makes it appear. I, too, am an anti-colonialist; and I still think Britain's postwar record in the liberation of colonial peoples good, though, again, not as good as some British apologists like to imagine.

But there is more to it than that, I fear: there is the troubling phenomenon—urgently in need of demythologization—of the "generation gap." Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien has written (in the *Listener*) that "The spiritual children of Ismene are more numerous than those of Antigone . . . and their arguments are, as always, reasonable. . . . But Antigone will not heed such calculations: she is an ethical and religious force, an uncompromising element in our being, as dangerous in her way as Creon, whom she perpetually challenges and provokes."

Mrs. Anthea Mander Lahr is plainly an Antigone; and I think she would like to force me into the role of a Creon. If she will allow me—Dr. O'Brien sees these three as basic human archetypes—I would prefer to settle just now for the role of Ismene, who "resisted Creon's order, but did not flout it." As if to prove the endurance of the myth, Mr. Donald Davie has recently argued, taking up Dr. O'Brien's suggestion (I quote again, this time from a recent *Encounter*), that the trouble with Britain (and Mrs. Lahr and I are both British and, let's face it, white and—by Third World standards—highly prosperous) is that Britain's Creons since 1940 have lost their nerve, that the Ismenes have opted out, and that the British intelligentsia "are all Antigones really. Creon's is such a thankless role in modern Britain that there is no one left to play it with conviction." One does not have to go along with all of this (it smells too authoritarian to me) to see that Mr. Davie has a point: Sophocles' *Antigone* would not be a play without Antigone, but nor would it be a play without Creon—or, indeed, poor, forgotten Ismene.

Still, I have one strong reason for being glad that Mrs. Anthea Mander Lahr has turned out to be so determined an Antigone—that Antigone who, the reader will remember, performed the funeral rites for her brother against Creon's will. As the reader may have gathered, she happens to be my sister. That gives me hope.

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Harry Pesin

Black Nationalism—Fact & Fantasy

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . In my opinion, in "The Fantasy of Black Nationalism" [September], Theodore Draper (and Commentary in publishing the article) have performed a service for honesty and understanding in dealing with the tangled, passionate, and often self-contradictory issues comprehended in the black nationalist thrust. He has done so with clarity, with sympathy, and with a perspective that derives from his long study of revolutionary movements. The theories, assumptions, and pretensions, both of the black nationalist movements and of their protagonists, are dissected conscientiously, their strengths and weaknesses elucidated, and their import for the nation's and the Negro's future evaluated.

I consider "The Fantasy of Black Nationalism" required reading for anyone who aspires to speak or act constructively in the struggle for racial justice.

Roy Wilkins
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Theodore Draper's article on black nationalism is a remarkable achievement in research and presentation. I read it with unflagging excitement, sensing all the while the painful dilemma of the American Negro in his unsuccessful search for a way out of the ghetto and an escape from white persecution. May I suggest that the best road is that indicated by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King? The millions will not emigrate to Africa nor will they congregate in the worst of our Southern states. They belong where they are, only on a much higher rung of the economic and social ladder.

Louis Fischer
Princeton, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read Theodore Draper's learned and informative article with great interest. As for the historical section, the only comment I would make is that the motives of some of the white politicians who advocated colonization may have been more complex and more subtle than is commonly realized. This is particularly true of Lincoln. An easy political reading of Lincoln's Annual Message to Congress of December 1, 1862, in which he proposed a constitutional amendment providing for compensated emancipation, makes this quite clear. He stated that he was in favor of colonization: "I cannot make it better known than it already is, that I strongly favor colonization." But one can see from the context that he was silencing objections that the freedmen, if they remained in the country, would compete with white labor or overpower the whites, objections which in the next sentence he alleged were "largely imaginary, if not sometimes malicious." Lincoln's conclusive words on the subject, a paragraph later, were: "Equally distributed among the whites of the whole country, and there would be but one colored to seven whites. Could the one, in any way, greatly disturb the seven?" These are not the words of a doctrinaire separationist who believed that white and black people could *never* be politically assimilated.

As for the sociological section, which is the real thrust of the article, my comment deals with Draper's overall perspective. Draper, it seems to me, is unduly terrified of the phenomenon he is describing and unduly anxious about where it is going. What makes this even more curious is that many of the opinions that fall under the umbrella of black nationalism are street noises, which, as he himself notes, have a very weak hold upon solid Negro opinion and aspiration. Then why does he take these opinions, many of which are admittedly ugly, so seriously? Fundamentally, I contend, it is because Draper finds it difficult to concede to the Negro what he concedes as a matter of course to other minority groups in the United States. This is the desire and the right of what may be called normality as an ethnic group. This, of course, means a rough equality of social condition, equal enough so that the Negro on the one hand has the positive contentments that everyone else has and on the other hand does not see himself as invidiously deprived and humiliated. As Glazer and Moynihan have pointed out, this is more or less the status which the Jews, Italians, and Irish have in the United States. One might also point out that they do not possess "perfect" equality. But in the case of these

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"successful" ethnic minorities, their status is good enough so that they are not bothered by the fact that some yacht clubs do not want them, and they do not even have to delude themselves about the existence of these facts in order to be happy.

Now this is the practical destination of the ethnic minority in the United States, a destination, I contend, which the Negro must reach if the American democracy is not to fall apart. Yet Draper cannot clearly see the Negro as ever becoming a successful *ethnic* group. He is "different." Why? In Draper's own words: "the ethnic concept does not go far enough. No ethnic group in American history has encountered degradation and discrimination so rigid and so lasting as those established by the color line." But in what way does this reflection about the Negro's past qualify the legitimacy or the possibility of his destination in the future? For what other option does the Negro have? He certainly is not going to be absorbed. And he is not going back to Africa. And there is no need to look at what is his realistic social goal as simply making a virtue of necessity. The Negro church has a voluntary impulsion behind it and so does Negro society in general. But it is hard to see this and hard, sometimes, even for Negroes to believe it. This is why they cannot quietly set up clubs at universities. Some, at least, feel that they have to do this via a confrontation with whites, proving to the world, and, I suppose, to themselves, that they have a right to establish—a club.

Now once one concedes to the Negroes that right of normality, as a dignified people, much of what they have been doing and saying can be seen from a different focus. In the first place it is perfectly clear that the Negro does not have the equality of social and economic condition that is presupposed by this normality. He is poor and he has been the object of prejudices that have closed doors in his face. But in addition to all this he has had the misfortune to be bombarded with theories about his ultimate destiny, the old canned formulas of "integration" or "segregation," which, as formulas, bypassed his fundamental needs. What, for example, has the need for technical education, in fundamental respects, got to do with either segregation or integration? In this ideologized atmosphere Negro nationalism has tried to do two things. First, it sought to enable the Negro to supply his own answer about his ultimate destiny, an answer that was not simply imposed upon him by whites. But one must remember that the emergence of political nationalism, with such concrete schemes as emigration, was characteristically a response to a terrible political situation. Delany and his colleagues were shattered by the Fugitive Slave Law; and one of the reasons they did not make more headway among Negroes is that states such as Massachusetts passed Personal Liberty Laws which nullified the Fugitive Slave Law. The second aim of Negro nationalism, focusing upon the Negro's weak economic condition, was to encourage him to aspire to do great things. As Draper noted, Garvey's shipping line was an important element in his nationalism.

Now one may predict that as the Negro acquires normality, this nationalism will cease to be ideological. The Italians in the United States today would, from every indication, seem to be a contented people who are quite pleased to be what they are. It is inconceivable that they are obsessed or even distracted by the question, "What are we?" Can one call this natural group pride "nationalism"? If one does, one must be aware that it is not really an "ism." But the Negro lacks the equality that the Italians and others possess. His "nationalism" becomes a polemical instrument of elevation. As such it can easily attach itself to vulgar and base themes of revenge. This is intensified by the fact that it is at the same time a vehicle for getting out from under the power of the canned formulas which have imprisoned thought and policy about race relations. One can realize, as Draper clearly does, that radical separatism is no solution because, among other reasons, no one really wants it. One can also demand, as Draper properly does, that the claims made in the name of nationalism must be subordinated to general standards of excellence and of right and wrong—a process, if one likes, of "integration." His remarks about possible aberrations that might arise in black schools of black studies are clear words of warning, though it would be wise to see what actually happens. But I contend that it is easier to resist and to answer the nonsense uttered in

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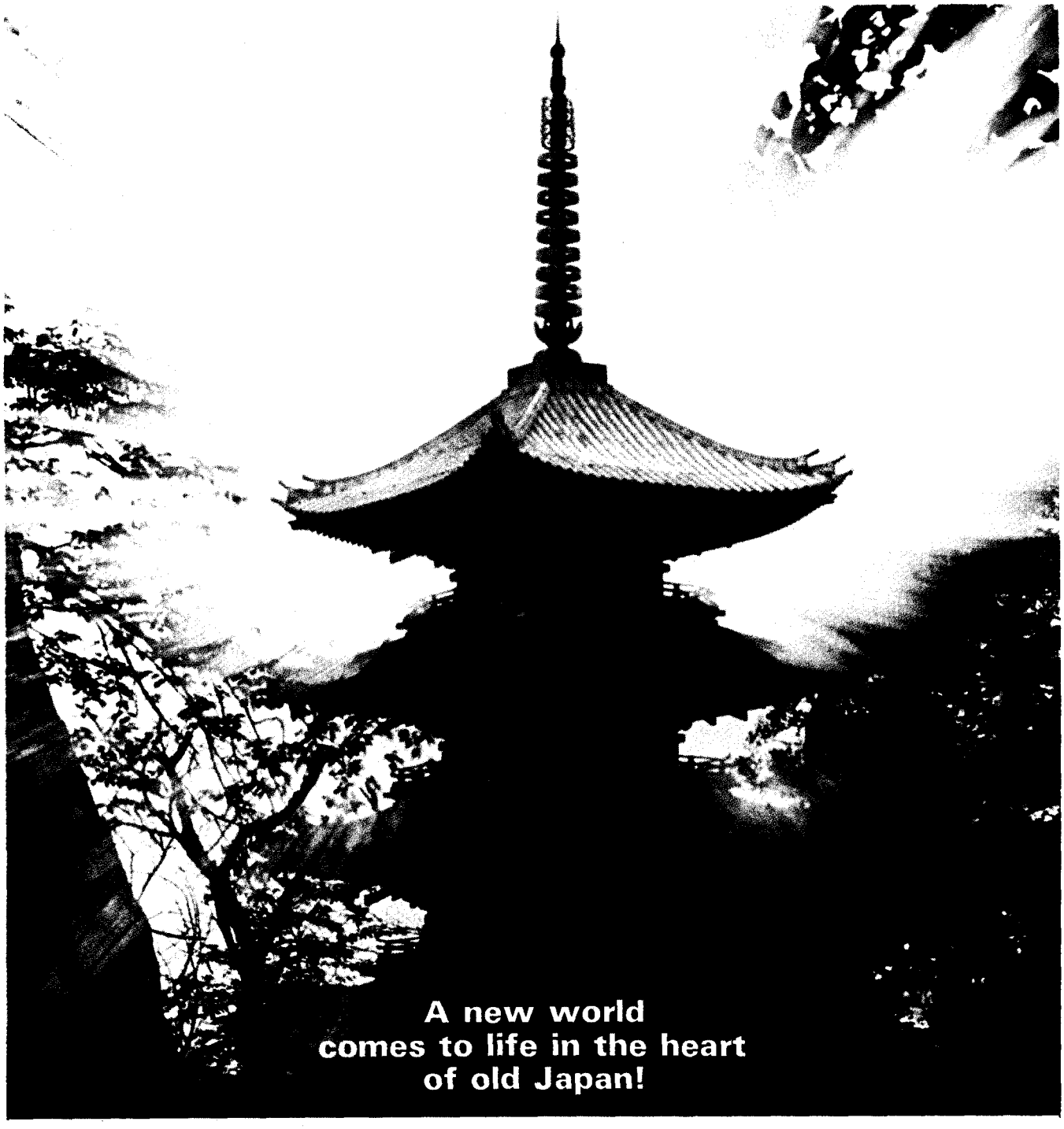

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the name of black nationalism if one also sees the sense in it. Surely the longing for a self-respecting, normal, equal community, which cannot in any way be fitted into the terms "segregation" or "integration" as ordinarily used, is by no means the exclusive property of an ideologized nationalism, among Negroes or anyone else.

HOWARD BROTZ
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thomas Wolfe may have been the greatest American novelist because he tried to "get it all down," but the analogy fails to hold with Theodore Draper's comprehensive survey of black nationalism. Unfortunately, it is impossible in a letter to correct more than a few major inadvertences. . . .

The primary fault with Mr. Draper's typology is his failure to realize that Booker T. Washington stands in the nationalist tradition. Washington's rejection of political and civil-rights agitation and his emphasis on economic self-help, racial pride and solidarity, and a separate, self-segregated group life all make clear that accommodation is another form nationalism can and does take. Washington agreed with Delany that blacks constitute a "nation within a nation" and this explains why the Tuskegeean was Marcus Garvey's hero.

Garvey was neither the charlatan nor the buffoon that Mr. Draper pictures. It is no secret that a cabal of respectable integrationist Negroes conspired to destroy Garvey and were successful, not because Garvey was a mountebank but because his financial records were informal and disorganized. More important, Garvey was not an emigrationist. He advocated a spiritual return to Africa. This position should not be so difficult to comprehend if it is compared with the Zionism of Jews who never go to Israel. As a place to live, the mind is ultimately more important than the land. Garvey is a link between Delany's emigrationism and the desire of the Nation of Islam and others to construct an African community in this country. But, again, the historical continuity cannot be understood without seeing that Washington falls into the nationalist schema on the basis of his shift in emphasis from integrationist political action to separatist economic development.

Although he suggests it, Mr. Draper does not stress strongly enough the inevitable ambivalence of the whole nationalist movement. He chastises black nationalism for being inconsistent without adequately recognizing that the cause of its ambiguity is the restrictive and oppressive exclusivism of white racism. Blacks are caught in a dilemma of identity which classifies them both as Americans and as Negroes. In one sense they are self-evidently both, but they cannot fully be both because the society does not tolerate real pluralism. In another sense they are neither, since the categories are in fact mutually exclusive.

If they affirm their Americanism, blacks deny the reality of color-caste differentiation. If they affirm their racial identification, they deny the reality of their rather complete assimilation into American culture. This latter affirmation is, of course, nationalism, and its contradictions are hardly the fault of blacks struggling with the paradox of self-definition. The contradictions are inherent in the dichotomous categorization imposed by the white society and the resultant Kafkaesque existence.

Nationalism in any of its forms is simply an attempt to refuse being relegated to the subordinate status of a despised minority group and to elect membership in a proud, self-conscious, self-determining ethnic group. In this context, nationalism is not fantasy but a positive attempt by blacks to come to terms with the frustration of bifurcation by choosing, affirming, and emphasizing the racial part of their "twoness." The real fantasy is the deception of white America which believes it can continue to force black people to live in the limbo of "inner psychological paradox," as Du Bois called it. This psychotic white fantasy is encouraged by the condescending scholarship of Mr. Draper which reduces the great identity struggle of a people to a farce in which they are subtly made responsible for their own duality and thus for their own victimization.

RICHARD NEWMAN
Department of Human Relations
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who has done scholarly research into early black separatism, I find several significant errors in Draper's article that indi-

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cate a typical white prejudgment rather than an objective examination of the historical evidence.

Draper maintains that "the 'Back-to-Africa' movement was in its inception a white man's fantasy for Negroes." This is simply untrue. The "Back-to-Africa" movement first developed ideologically and organizationally in the Northern free black communities. By 1815 its supporters included Paul Cuffee, James Forten, Bishop Richard Allen, Reverend Daniel Coker, and Reverend Peter Williams—in short, the black elite of the day. These men were united in the African Institution which, P. J. Staudenraus states, "urged free Negroes to migrate to Africa." My own findings confirm this evaluation by Staudenraus, whom Draper used as a source but completely ignored on *this point*. As a matter of fact, immediately after forming the white American Colonization Society in December 1816, Reverend Robert Finley left Washington to meet with the Philadelphia branch of the African Institution. He was warmly received. James Forten told him that "Africa was the proper place for a colony," and Bishop Richard Allen "spoke warmly in favor of colonization in Africa—declaring that were he young he would go himself." A few days later, on January 25, 1817, James Forten wrote to Paul Cuffee to reiterate "unalterably" that black people "will never become a people until they com[e] out from amongst the white people. . . ." That the black masses of Philadelphia and elsewhere soon rejected this viewpoint does not obscure its significance in the history of black separatism nor minimize Draper's error in omitting it.

Also, Draper manages to distort history by declaring that the black nationalist Martin R. Delany eschewed black separatism after the Civil War. On the contrary, Delany stood by the side of black nationalist Reverend Henry M. Turner in his advocacy of colonization in Africa. As a matter of fact, on March 21, 1878, the two men stood side by side in consecrating a ship in Charleston, South Carolina, that would carry several hundred volunteer black settlers to Africa. For his efforts, Delany was rewarded with a Liberian flag.

These two errors (and there may be others outside my particular area of interest) indicate a desire to minimize the impulse for black separatism and its genesis in the black community. I suspect that this impulse is greater than we realize, and that the most dangerous "fantasy" is not its impracticality but our obscuring its clear message. Whites have failed to understand or even recognize black separatism, preferring to believe that the black experience in America was "bad, sometimes terrible, but not impossible." This is largely because black separatism represents the final and harshest comment on white America—because it is the strongest condemnation ever made of American racism's unceasing destructiveness, everlasting injustices, and humiliating illegalities.

WILLIAM LOREN KATZ
New York City

MR. DRAPER writes:

Professor Brotz seems to be looking for trouble unnecessarily. I thought I had made it clear that the colonizationist movement "was calculated to appeal to the greatest number and the most varied motives"—hardly an oversimplification. As for Lincoln (and Jefferson), they were heavyhearted colonizationists—but they were colonizationists. Professor Brotz is reading too much into Lincoln's Message to Congress of December 1, 1862. Earlier in the same Message, Lincoln noted the unwillingness of free Negroes to emigrate to Liberia or to Haiti, much to his regret. As a result, he had to reassure white laborers that many more freed Negroes would not take their jobs. His arguments in the Message were directed to that end, not to modifying his emigrationist position.

Professor Brotz has given an example of the danger in selective quotation. He makes much of these words: "Equally distributed among the whites of the whole country, and there would be but one colored to seven whites. Could the one, in any way, greatly disturb the seven?" But Lincoln knew that the colored population was not equally distributed. He went on to say, in the very next sentence, that "there are many communities now, having more than one free colored person, to seven whites; and this, without any apparent consciousness of evil from it." In short, he tried to have it both ways. Later, in the same paragraph, he also tried to reassure Northerners that emancipation would not lead to a Negro migra-

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tion from South to North. He was right—for about half a century. But then he went on to reiterate that "gradual emancipation and *deportation*" (my italics, T.D.) were still the cure for mass Negro flight to the North.

I would agree that Lincoln was not a "doctrinaire separationist." Let us say that he was an "undoctrinaire separationist"—but a separationist. If he believed that white and black people could *ever* be politically assimilated, why was he a separationist at all? He cannot be made an assimilationist *quand même* because he resorted to the somewhat specious argument that seven whites need not be greatly disturbed by one black, *if* the colored people were "equally distributed"—which they were not at the time and have not yet begun to be. I am ready and willing to believe that Lincoln would have preferred the whites not to be "greatly disturbed." But on many other occasions, he recognized that they were —and from this unhappy recognition flowed his consistent, perhaps heartsick, colonizationism.

In short, it was not so much that Lincoln wanted to be a colonizationist as that he felt he was forced by circumstances to be one. I have gone into this matter in some detail because Professor Brotz misinterprets me in much the same way. He contends that I take the black nationalist "noises" too seriously because "Draper finds it difficult to concede to the Negro what he concedes as a matter of course to other minority groups in the United States," namely, "the desire and the right of what may be called normality as an ethnic group."

In the first place, should present-day black nationalism be dismissed so cavalierly and invidiously? It has become probably the dominant and certainly the most aggressive tendency among black students and intellectuals, perhaps even black youth as a whole. "Solid Negro opinion and aspiration" may be holding out, but it has been temporarily thrown on the defensive. When several of our colleges and at least one major university see fit to introduce programs of Black Nationalist Studies in the guise of Black Studies, such a movement must be taken seriously. I am not "unduly terrified"; I am concerned and worried.

In the second place, I would resent—if I could take this part of Professor Brotz's letter seriously—the idea that I find it difficult to concede the "normality of an ethnic group" to the Negro. After a century, I find it difficult to believe that most white people are willing to make this concession. If they were, we would not have the problem of black nationalism. It is almost humiliating for me to have to defend myself against this absurd charge. If it needs saying, I would gladly, jubilantly, settle for considering the Negroes another ethnic group. If most whites were also willing to do so, we would have a different kind of Negro problem. When I wrote that "while the national concept goes too far, the ethnic concept does not go far enough," I was obviously referring—as my next sentence clearly showed—to the history of the American Negro, not to my own preference.

This is a gratuitous quarrel. If Professor Brotz thinks that I am unwilling to concede "normality" —or the kind of "equality that the Italians and others possess"—to

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the Negro, he simply does not know me and has chosen to read something alien to me in the article. In fact, he agrees that the Negroes have lacked such equality. Why blame me for a fact of life that should be the starting point of any serious consideration of the Negro problem?

Professor Newman also raises historical questions. He says that Booker T. Washington's "accommodationism" was merely another form of "nationalism." This stretches the term "nationalism" so much that it takes in its opposite—and thereby empties it of real meaning. If Washington was a Delany-type nationalist, as Professor Newman suggests, who was not? For about a decade after 1852, Delany urged Negroes to emigrate; Washington repeatedly preached against the notion of returning to Africa and urged them to stay in the South. Washington believed that Negroes would take their full and equal place in the United States *as Americans*—when they were fully and equally prepared for it economically and educationally. In effect, he fostered a process of full "Americanization," as he understood it, not a process of breaking away from America, which is what the latter-day black nationalists and their true forerunners stand for.

As for Garvey, Professor Newman makes him into a charlatan, if not a buffoon, by denying that he was an emigrationist. Garvey was hardly a consistent thinker, and he expressed his credo with more or less clarity at different times. He once said that he did not want "all the Negroes in Africa"—only the good ones. As his biographer Edmund David Cronon notes, one of the last issues of his magazine, *Black Man*, "contained an earnest plea for support of U.S. Senator Theodore G. Bilbo's bill for the repatriation of American Negroes to Africa" (p. 186). Bilbo, a Southern bigot, advocated far more than a "spiritual return to Africa," and Garvey's movement knew it. As I tried to show, Garvey's emigrationism was acted out as if it were an African fantasy, but that is very different from saying that he was not an emigrationist at all or only a "spiritual" one.

Finally, Professor Newman maintains that black "nationalism *in any of its forms*" (my italics, T.D.) is no more than the determination to become a fully accepted "ethnic group." The question is whether this is what the black nationalists believe, not what Professor Newman or I may accept. If I were a black nationalist, I would resent Professor Newman's apologia far more than my own critical approach. For Professor Newman simply refuses to take the black nationalists at their word, which is to say, to take them seriously. Instead, he chooses to tell them that they really want to be another "ethnic group," not a separate nation. This is another form of patronization and condescension, all the more offensive because it pretends to defend what it is in reality trying to reinterpret out of existence.

Our third scholar, Professor William Loren Katz, could benefit from a little more scholarly research. What was the African Institution, which he mentions with such elation? It was originally a private, white British organization, established in 1807, to take over the virtual management of the British colony of Sierra Leone on the west coast of Africa. It had been settled by a few hundred former American slaves, freed by the British in return for service against the American revolutionary forces during the War for Independence. Destitute and unwanted in London, they had been induced to seek a haven in Sierra Leone. The African Institution also mismanaged the colony and later transformed itself into a purely anti-slavery society. It held its last public meeting in 1827, after which it barely survived at all (Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 123).

Sierra Leone had attracted the American colonizationists' attention before 1807 (*ibid.*, p. 112). In turn, the African Institution made efforts to attract more black American settlers. When the work of the African Institution came to the attention of Paul Cuffee (or Cuffe, as his chief biographer spells his name), the half-Negro, half-American-Indian ship captain, a start was made in America. Cuffe made his first trip to Sierra Leone in 1811 and transported 38 American Negro emigrants there in 1815. He was also instrumental in getting Daniel Coker, a teacher, James Forten, a sailmaker, and the Reverend Peter Williams, Jr., to set up "miniature African Institutions" in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York respectively. As Forten wrote to the British African Institution in 1816, "we consider ourselves as merely instruments for the

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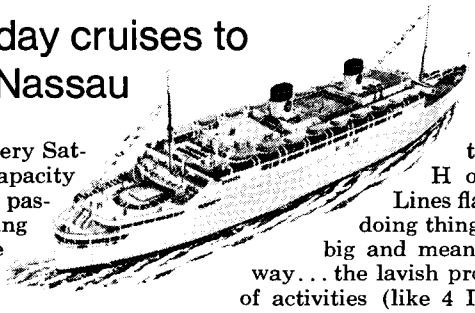

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furtherance of your views" (P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p. 32). The white organizers of the American Colonization Society were also partially inspired by the British African Institution.

What does this necessary background do to Professor Katz's point? To begin with, American white colonizationism antedated both Cuffe's interest in Africa and the American Colonization Society. The idea of colonizationism took hold among whites during the last quarter of the 18th century (N. H. Sherwood, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, March 1916, p. 478). If Cuffe and his disciples represent the first black Back-to-Africa movement, they still came later than the crystallization of the earliest white colonizationist sentiment. But beyond this, Cuffe's role was made possible by white British colonizationism which was closely related to white American colonizationism. Cuffe, Forten and the rest of that handful were at best generals without an army, not "the black elite of the day." They met so much fierce opposition from the mass of free Negroes that Forten, Richard Allen, the Reverend Peter Williams, and others changed sides and came out against African colonizationism (P. J. Staudenraus, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-89, 193).

In any event, Cuffe, who died in 1817, and his small group of black American fellow-travelers of the British African Institution hardly represented a "movement" in the sense that the white American Colonization Society constituted a genuine movement. When Professor Katz says that "these men were united in the African Institution," he does not seem to realize that this was primarily a British organization and that its American appendages were so amorphous and short-lived that they cannot bear the weight and significance he gives to them.

These historical issues were too complex and lengthy for my article. It has been necessary to go into them in some detail here because of the objections that have been raised. There is something else of more general import in this discussion. The recent black-nationalist historical "revisionism" is creating a new mythology by almost ludicrously pumping up every forerunner of today's black nationalism in order to give the impression (implicit particularly in

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Professor Newman's letter) that it has long been the dominant tendency in American Negro life. We are getting more and more of this bad history and bad politics.

But I owe Professor Katz a debt for bringing up one of my favorite characters, Martin R. Delany. I have revised and enlarged my article for a book which Viking Press will publish soon. The book, twice as long as the article, has given me the opportunity to devote most of a chapter to Dr. Delany's extraordinary career. I think Professor Katz and others may have some surprises in store for them. In my article, I nowhere declared that "the black nationalist Martin R. Delany eschewed black separatism after the Civil War." It is true that, in 1878, he came out in support of an exodus of 206 black emigrants from Charlestown to Liberia (not "several hundred"). But that cost him very little and represented a last, fleeting flicker of the old emigrationist flame. Far more important during the decade and a half he spent in South Carolina was his domestic political activity, culminating in his support in 1876 of Wade Hampton, the successful Democratic candidate for Governor, as a result of which the white supremacists began to make their successful comeback. When Delany gave his blessings to the so-called "exodus" two years later, he had had nothing to do with emigrationism for almost two decades.

More on the Middle East

To the Editor of Commentary:

"We win the wars we did not fight, and the peace that was never signed ushers in a golden age." Thus concludes a chapter of one of the most sympathetic books recently published on the Palestine problem, Christopher Sykes's *Crossroads to Israel*. I was reminded forcibly of this pungent sentence when . . . I came upon the stimulating controversy in your columns between Professors Nadav Safran and Amos Perlmutter ["Letters from Readers," September, October]. . . .

Perlmutter assails Safran for drawing hypothetical maps and for ignoring ideological and psychological factors; he then proceeds himself to draw a map (albeit a rather more nebulous one than Safran's) which (*pace* Perlmutter) will "give the Palestinians what they have always . . . sought —a land of their own." . . .

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My recent conversations in Israel with Palestinian Arabs, both humble and mighty (or would-be mighty), have convinced me . . . that for the Palestinian Arabs Zion is not "*a* land of their own" but "*their* land of their own"—from the hills of Lebanon to the Gulf of Aqaba, and from the Mediterranean Sea to the River Jordan. Even the most "moderate" Palestinians see partition as, at best, a means toward the ultimate end—a unified Arab Palestine. . . . The Palestinians have more or less unanimously rejected every previous proposal for partition from whatever quarter, including that made by the 1937 Royal Commission on Palestine to which Christopher Sykes's perceptive comment above refers. Given the current psychological condition of the Palestinian people, I see no reason why this attitude should now change; certainly I saw no evidence of such a change this summer in Palestine itself. . . .

Perlmutter's projected "solution" (by no means a wholly original one, as he, I am sure, would be the first to admit) seems to me to have been devised by a fellow-inhabitant of the fantastic political cloud-cuckoo-land into which Perlmutter inserts Safran. Perlmutter points out the necessity for respecting the "political and psychological purposes and commitments" of the Palestinians; he then proceeds: "Military protection of the Palestinian state should be entrusted to Israel." Really!

Surely the real trouble (as Perlmutter himself seems to hint at in his opening remarks) is that the thousand-and-one "solutions" to the problem produced over the past fifty years have all found their ultimate destination in the dust-heap of history books. Without daring to seem too much of a "realist," might I suggest that, after past and present experience, we try starting from the premise that there is *no* "solution" to this problem? Is not that in itself a solution of a kind, albeit a distasteful one? The alternative search for the magical formula for resolving the Middle East situation seems to me futile and even dangerous. Suppose we found it? Might we not find ourselves in the same unhappy position as that imprudent woman, Pandora?

BERNARD M. J. WASSERSTEIN
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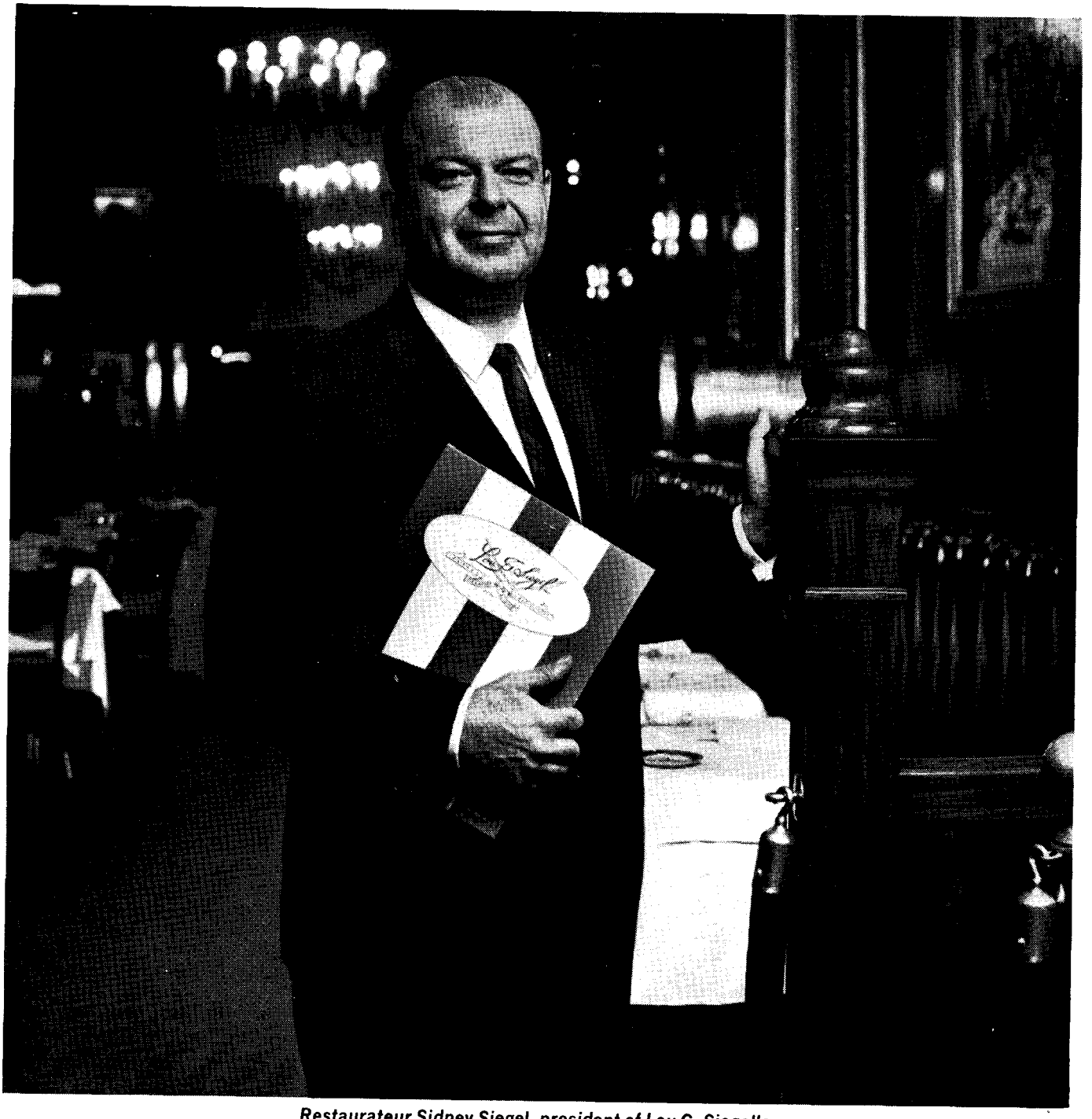

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Socialism and the Future

Robert L. Heilbroner

SOME YEARS AGO, writing on the prospects for American capitalism, I began by asserting that the capitalist system, whatever the strains and stresses to which it would be subject, bade fair to remain the dominant system in America and Western Europe during our lifetimes, and that any serious attempt to project large-scale social trends should begin from that premise.* Now I should like to undertake a similar speculative examination of the prospects for socialism, for I also take it as a datum that some form of socialism will be the predominant economic system in most of the rest of the world during our lifetimes, and that even in Europe and America it will constitute the image of a society against which capitalism will be measured by its critics.

But no sooner do we raise the question of the prospect for socialism than we encounter a difficult problem. It is the problem of deciding what we mean by socialism. How is one to speak of the prospects of a "system" that presumably embraces Norway as well as Russia, or that is expressed by the ideas of Bernard Shaw as well as of Mao Tse-tung? If there is a single identificatory mark of socialism, it is certainly not visible on the surface.

Yet, at second look, perhaps we can find a way of penetrating the surface variety of socialist institutions and thought to reach a common core. For it is not socialism alone that presents us with a confusing heterogeneity of systems, but capitalism as well; and yet we feel perfectly assured in applying the common term "capitalist" to worlds as far apart as those depicted by Sinclair Lewis and Thomas Mann, or Faulkner and Proust. And there is a very good reason for our generalizing approach to the societies of capitalism. This is the presence within all of them of a common set of institutions and ideas—the institution of the basically uncontrolled market system and the ideas of the legitimacy of the private ownership of the means of production. In a word, we find a *business system* at the core of all capitalist societies, no matter how diverse their other characteristics. Whatever their incompatibilities in culture or life-styles, Buddenbrooks and Babbitt were both businessmen, and as such they understood and shared important common activities and values and goals.

Hence the obvious question is whether there is not, within the variety of socialist nations, a similar systemic core that might play the same identificatory role as does business within the many forms of capitalism. The question has an obvious answer: one element of the socialist system must certainly be the structural element that we find within all socialist societies, corresponding to the market system in capitalism. This is the predominance of some form of *planning*.

But this structural element is by no means enough in itself to provide an infallible identification for socialism—after all, one can find some degree of planning in all capitalist nations and some evidences of the market in all socialist societies. Hence we must add a critical second attribute by which socialism can be identified. This is the common presence of a guiding socialist *ideology*, corresponding to the business ideology in capitalism.

What is the content of this socialist ideology? It will help if we begin by differentiating it from that of capitalism. I think it is fair to say that the beliefs of the business system mainly concern themselves with the justification of the prevailing economic order, especially the institution of private property and of the relatively free market. To put it differently, no capitalist nation or philosopher or economist has any grand designs for the fundamental reshaping of society through capitalism. Certainly capitalism aims at the material well-being of its constituents, but equally certainly it entertains no thought that the pursuit of well-being will alter the basic class character of the system or modify the competitive or acquisitive drives from which the system derives its momentum. That is what it means to say that capitalist thought is essentially conservative.

By way of contrast, socialist thought is primarily concerned with bringing into existence a social order very different from that which it finds in the world. Thus its use of planning—or, for that matter, of the market mechanism—is guided by

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* See *The Limits of American Capitalism*, I, pp. 3-4.

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purposes wholly at variance with those of capitalism. Capitalism uses the market or planning to service and support a social system in which the prosperity of the capital-owning class is a central aim of economic policy. Socialism not only denies the legitimacy of this underlying conception, but it intends the instrumentalities of plan and market to create an egalitarian society in which no class may gain the strategic position conferred by the ownership of society's productive assets. Further, far from ignoring the effects of economic progress on classes and motives, as does capitalism, socialism intends progress to lead to the creation of a wholly new kind of society, free of invidious striving and built on new motives of cooperation and confraternity.

Now, it need hardly be said that there is a long step between socialist declaration and reality. In addition, let us reiterate the point with which we began—that the variation among socialist nations is very great. Clearly, the mere presence of similar institutions and ideologies no more produces a common existential quality to socialism than it does under capitalism—indeed, life in "socialist" Yugoslavia may well resemble life in "capitalist" Italy more than it does that in "socialist" China.

What, then, is the usefulness of emphasizing the common features of planning and ideology? The answer is that these features make it possible to talk about the future of socialism. For the central presence of planning and its ideology has as important a consequence for socialism as the presence of the business system for capitalism. It is that within each type of society *these common elements give rise to common kinds of problems.*

Thus, in reflecting on the prospects for, say, capitalism in Japan and America, it is necessary to bear in mind that for all the dissimilarity of their social and cultural environments, both are societies that must contend with the peculiar problems of a business structure and a business ideology. And in the same way, when we attempt to reason prospectively with regard to the outlook for the socialist nations, we must recognize that underlying their varied internal and external challenges, all of them must cope with problems characteristic of the institution of planning and endemic to the ideological goal in whose service the activity of planning is carried on.

II

OUR AIM, in the following pages, will be mainly to explore the nature of these problems of socialism. But we must begin by bringing to the fore an aspect of the problem of socialism that complicates any discussion of its future trajectory. It is that socialism in our day must be considered with reference to two very different kinds of societies in two very different settings. On the one hand, socialism appears as a powerful force for change in the most backward and underdeveloped countries in the world; on the other hand, it also exists as an agency or as an ideal for social change in the most advanced and wealthy nations.

It is hardly surprising that the problems associated with planning or with the realization of the socialist vision are not at all alike in these two radically contrasting environments; the analogy is with the striking contrast between the problems of primitive capitalism, with its grim struggle between the classes, and those of advanced capitalism, with its vast middle class obedient to an advertising culture. The difference, however, is that whereas the problems associated with nascent capitalism are now largely relegated to the history books, those of "early" socialism exist side by side with those of "late" socialism. Thus we cannot discuss the problems of socialism without distinguishing between the forms these problems take in each of its two contemporary manifestations.

Of the two, it is easier to describe the problems of socialism in the underdeveloped nations. I have written elsewhere on this, so here I shall be very brief. The situation in most of the backward nations today can only be described as desperate. Present standards of living exceed subsistence requirements by so little that the least misfortune threatens catastrophe on a giant scale. Strongholds of foreign capital inhibit the redirection of the energies of the people. Incompetent or indifferent regimes seem unable or unwilling to galvanize their moribund societies. And above this nightmarish landscape, in which everything moves in slow motion, towers an oncoming tidal wave of population advancing with horrendous speed: within the next ten years the number of women in the most fertile age brackets will double.

In these circumstances, the task of those socialist governments that have come to power, or of those that will, is clearly marked. It is to place their nations on a war footing against existing conditions, to mobilize whole populations for production, to attack the psychological as well as the physical deficiencies of the backward areas with all the zeal and ardor of a military campaign.

Moreover, there is little doubt that revolutionary socialism, utilizing all-out planning, can accomplish these objectives. The prodigies of the Russian advance, the extraordinary achievements in the modernization of China, the remarkable arousal of the Cuban people* all testify beyond

*Let me cite the three most objective sources I know to buttress these assertions. On Russian growth: Richard Moorsteen and Raymond Powell, *The Soviet Capital Stock, 1929-1962* (also Charles K. Wilbur, *The Soviet Model and the Underdeveloped Countries);* on Chinese modernization: Barry Richman, *Industrial Society in Communist China;* on the Cuban effort: Wassily Leontieff, *New York Review of Books,* August 21, 1969.

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possibility of doubt that "war planning" can realize its giant, but essentially simple, aims. That this kind of massive planning is likely to be accompanied by enormously costly errors, or that it may, from time to time, imperil the success of the whole development effort through an excess of mindless zeal, is also to be expected. Yet the most serious and deeply rooted problems of planning in the backward world are not likely to be these perhaps inevitable mistakes of planning. Rather, as the examples of Russia and China and Cuba all show, *the endemic problem of planning in the underdeveloped nations resides in the non-economic measures required to bring about the economic changes that revolutionary socialism so imperatively seeks.*

For the objectives of economic development do not lie, like a military citadel, exposed to the thrust of a single daring campaign. On the contrary, the development assault is better likened to a long grueling march through a hostile hinterland. The real resistance to development comes not from the old regimes, which can be quickly overcome, but from the masses of the population who must be wrenched from their established ways, pushed, prodded, cajoled, or threatened into heroic efforts, and then systematically denied an increase in well-being so that capital can be amassed for future growth. This painful reorientation of a whole culture, judging by past experience, will be difficult or impossible to attain without measures of severity; and when we add the need to maintain a fervor of participation long beyond the first flush of spontaneous enthusiasm, the necessity for stringent limitations on political opposition and for forcible means of assuring economic cooperation seems virtually unavoidable.

To be sure, one must not overgeneralize as to this grim prospect. As with the not unrelated distortions of life imposed under the aegis of early capitalism, the extent of the deforming pressures of early socialism will vary from one milieu or regime to another. Some nations, unfortunate in their resource endowments or in their political connections with the industrialized nations, may be forced to undergo a more or less thoroughgoing totalitarian transition. Others, better endowed or better connected, may pass through the thirty or fifty years of the modernizing transformation with a minimum of repression.

In general, however, when we seek to project the problems of socialism in the underdeveloped areas, we cannot sidestep the probability that intellectual stiflement, political repression, and enforced social conformity will figure prominently among them. Let me be quite explicit that when the alternatives to such a disciplined existence are degradation, misery, and premature death, the exercise of sternness and indoctrination appears in a very different light from that of an arbitrary and capricious tyranny. Nonetheless, the exercise of these measures, however necessary to assure the success of the development effort, is likely to affect the future of the nations who must suffer them no less severely than the hated influence of imperialism affected their past. Thus, when we inquire as to the outlook for socialism in the backward lands, it is necessary to recognize that it is likely to emerge both as the salvation of its otherwise doomed people, and also as the source of a moral and intellectual infection from which it may take generations to recover.

III

HOWEVER UNCERTAIN its outcome, it is at least clear what the general objectives of revolutionary socialist planning must be in the underdeveloped areas. But the matter gets much more complicated when we now begin to look into the problems of socialist planning at the other end of the spectrum—in the advanced nations where the modernization process is already complete.

Here it may help if we quickly review the history of the problem before examining its present-day characteristics. It is interesting to note that the very identification of planning as an intrinsic aspect of socialism is a relatively modern development. Before the Russian Revolution, the main concern of the leaders and theoreticians of socialism was largely historical—namely, how a new social order would emerge from the conflicts within an old one. Not until an actual socialist society had come into existence did the question of planning, only glancingly referred to by Marx and airily dismissed by Lenin, assume the central position of importance that it occupies today.* And not surprisingly, shortly thereafter came an attack on planning as the Achilles heel of a socialist system. Indeed, the most intellectually respectable criticism of socialism in the mid-30's was the effort of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek to destroy the credibility of socialism as a desirable social order, not by inveighing against its ideals or its excesses, but by demonstrating that the economic system on which it was based would not work.

In brief, the criticism of Hayek and von Mises was based on the contention that socialism was intrinsically unable to achieve a *rational* economic order—that is, a system in which all the factors of production were employed as efficiently as possible—because it lacked one critical mechanism: a market in which capital could be valued by the free offers of owners of capital and by the free bids of would-be hirers of capital.

* In a famous passage in *State and Revolution* (Chapter V, 4), Lenin described the activities of administering a socialist state as having been *"simplified* by capitalism to the utmost, till they have become the extraordinarily simple operations of watching, recording, and issuing receipts, within the reach of anybody who can read and write and knows the first four rules of arithmetic."

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Since by definition there could be no private ownership of capital, no free market price for it could ever be ascertained. As a result, the only way of deciding which enterprises were to have capital, and which were not, was perforce the essentially arbitrary decision of some Central Planning Board. Such a system, it was presumed, could not long endure.

This line of attack against socialism did not fare very well. In the mid-30's it was effectively demolished by Oscar Lange, a Polish economist then at Harvard. What Lange demonstrated in two brilliant articles was that Mises had failed to see that a Central Planning Board could indeed plan rationally, for the simple reason that it would *receive exactly the same information from a socialized economic system as did entrepreneurs under a market system.** The only difference would be that the Board would not learn about the condition of relative scarcity or plenty of capital goods or other commodities by price changes, as under capitalism, but by the building-up or running-down of inventories. That is, when a good was underpriced, instead of its price going up, as in a free market, the planners would discover that supplies of the good were being depleted faster than they were being replaced. All the Board would then have to do would be to raise the price until the level of inventories was again constant. As a result, it could allocate its resources quite as efficiently as any capitalist system. In fact, the allocation of capital (or other factors) arrived at in this way by a socialist state would not only be rational, but would be in many ways the *same* as that of a market system. The main differences would lie in the ability of the Board to supply articles of public consumption (such as education or parks or welfare services) on a more generous scale than in a laissez-faire system, and in its ability to set a higher rate of saving-and-investment than might be forthcoming under an uncontrolled system. But since a major criticism against laissez-faire was precisely its failure to provide adequate public services or to generate a sufficiently high rate of growth, these departures from the market idea seemed certain to enhance rather than to diminish social well-being.

Indeed, Lange quickly shifted from the defensive to the offensive. Not only would a planned economy meet the criteria for rationality, but its superior performance would soon reveal the outmoded inadequacy of a free enterprise economy. "*The real issue,*" Lange wrote in italics, "*is whether the further maintenance of the capitalist system is compatible with economic progress.*"† Or, as Benjamin Lippincott wrote in 1938 in the introduction to the little book in which Lange's articles appeared, "Where many under a capitalist economy must choose between a coat and a pair of shoes, under a socialist, many could choose between a radio and a telephone."**

MORE THAN a generation has now elapsed since the Lange articles appeared, and it should be possible to pass some sort of judgment on the debate. And the first judgment seems to be the irrelevance of the problem itself.‡ It is true, of course, that the absence of a market for capital can distort planning efforts —the Soviet predilection for huge and uneconomical dams and factories during their first Five Year Plans reflected their failure for many years to include a charge for capital in their projected industrial enterprises. But the obvious irrationality of this neglect of capital was eventually recognized, and a charge for capital was thereafter instituted.

But the whole question has an air of unreality. For what is the value of "rationality" as a criterion of economic performance? Are we to judge the Russian planning effort irrational because it has sacrificed present consumption for future growth to a far greater degree than the sacrificing generation might have voted for, had it been given the opportunity, but not, in all likelihood, to a greater degree than future generations would have voted for, if they could have? Per contra, are we to deem the American economy rational because it obediently provides its consumer markets with often trivial goods while it starves its housing market, or its central cities?

Clearly, the trouble with rationality is that it has two meanings. On the one hand it implies "reasonableness"—an attribute that is often glaringly absent under the market disposition of things as well as under a planned disposition. On the other hand, rationality also means that we will conserve the scarce resources of society by applying them where the need is greatest. That might seem to be a definition identical with "reasonableness," except for one thing: in a market society, "need" is determined by the existing distribution of income and wealth. An economy that produces lavishly for the rich and meanly for the poor is therefore "rational" in the sense that it is devoting its resources to those uses for which the greatest market demand exists, but it is hardly

*_Review of Economic Studies_, October 1936 and February 1937; subsequently published in _On the Economic Theory of Socialism_, 1938.

† _Ibid._, p. 110.

** _Ibid._, p. 32.

‡ It is interesting to note that in an article written toward the end of his life, Lange declared that were he to compose his famous articles on the possibility of rational planning again, he would give the problem much shorter shrift. For the computer, Lange believed, would give the Planning Board even *better* information than the market was capable of, especially with regard to long-term planning. "The market process with its cumbersome *tâtonnements* appears old-fashioned. Indeed, it may be considered as a computing device of the pre-electronic age." "The Computer and the Market," in _Socialism, Capitalism and Economic Growth_, C. H. Feinstein, ed., p. 158.

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rational in the sense of being reasonable or of being just.*

Lange himself sensed that the basic problem was not really that of rationality at all. *"The real danger of socialism,"* he wrote (again in italics), *"is that of a bureaucratization of economic life."*† It is true that he raised the problem almost to dismiss it—bureaucratization would happen in any event, he thought, and there would actually be a better chance of controlling it under socialism because "officials subject to democratic control seem preferable to private corporation executives who are practically responsible to nobody"**—but at least he saw that the test of socialist planning would be provided by criteria very different from those of a textbook on microeconomic perfection.

It need hardly be said that the experience of socialist planning, especially in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, has amply confirmed Lange's fears. For decades Lange's plan for a market-based socialism was ignored or dismissed as heresy, while the bureaucracies he warned against proved themselves increasingly incapable of handling their enormous ministries. Retrospectively, it now seems clear that corporation executives "who are practically responsible to nobody" are under far greater necessity to combat the stagnation of bureaucracy than socialist factory managers who find themselves personally responsible to a bureaucrat. The lesson of the postwar socialist experience is that the mechanism of planning is much more effective in laying in the foundations for an industrial society than in administering such a society after it has been brought into being. The more tightly linked the industrial activities of an economy, the more numerous its nodes of interdependence, the more problems does the planning apparatus encounter—not necessarily in the strictly economic form of irrational allocations of goods, but in the guise of low morale and productivity, frequent bottlenecks and partial breakdowns, poor quality of output, etc. As Paul Sweezy has commented with regard to the Soviet sphere in 1968, "Mass apathy, faltering productivity, economic stagnation —these and other symptoms of impending crisis were visible throughout the region."‡

Thus the debate on socialist planning has come to a curious conclusion. If the theoretical dispute has been settled in favor of socialism, the practical question seems to have gone the other way. The giant corporations of capitalism have outperformed the lumbering ministries of production at every hand. This does not mean, however, that socialism has met an impassable barrier in the form of an inherent limit imposed by its planning capabilities. On the contrary, it has only brought about a belated move in every advanced socialist nation in the direction urged by Lange—away from centralized toward decentralized planning, and in particular away from the directives of a monolithic Central Planning Board toward the autonomy and flexibility of a market-based system. In the Soviet Union we have the much publicized reforms of Liberman, in Czechoslovakia those of Ota Sik (at least until the Russian invasion), in Yugoslavia the adoption of a virtual "laissez-faire" market system in which the individual firm is run as a profit-making enterprise that vanishes via bankruptcy if it fails to meet the test of market viability, and in which the reach of central planning has been steadily reduced in scope.

Thus, ironically enough, socialist planning has been able to survive the difficulties inherent in the supervision of a complex industrial state only by reverting to the very market system whose shortcomings it was originally intended to redress. And yet, socialism has passed one test only to face another. The use of the market mechanism has unquestionably rescued socialism from a severe functional crisis. The question must now be faced as to whether it has done so by ceasing to be socialist.

IV

Does the market mechanism constitute a threat to socialism? The question is not an easy one to answer. On the one hand, there seems no more reason why the market cannot be used for socialist ends under a socialist state than why planning cannot be used for capitalist ends under a capitalist state. On the other hand, just as the mere presence of planning poses a sharp challenge, both structurally and ideologically, to capitalism, so the introduction of the market poses its inescapable problems for socialism.

Essentially the difficulty lies in the fact that in a market-run society, as we have seen, it is the distribution of purchasing power that sets the effective demands to which social effort will cater. But this raises a deep-seated problem for a socialist order. For if dollar votes are to shape the purposes for which social activity is carried on, it is important that these votes be distributed in accord with some principle of socialist equity. Nor is it difficult to discern what that principle should be. By every tenet of socialist belief in the inherent equality of men as human beings, there is a strong inherent bias toward a distribution of dollar voting power that will minimize the difference between one man's power to influence the outcome of the economic process and another's. To put it differently, there is a deep socialist belief in the propriety of income equality, perhaps

*Economists will recognize as well that whereas it is easy to specify what a rational distribution means in a static economy, it is impossible to do so when we deal with an economy growing over time.

† Lange, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism*, p. 109.

**Ibid.*, p. 110.

‡*Monthly Review*, October 1968, p. 11.

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tempered by social allowances for age, family size, etc.*

But the trouble with this solution is that incomes serve another purpose, even in a socialist society, beside that of constituting the source of the demand for goods and services. Incomes also constitute the rewards for labor; and insofar as labor has different degrees of difficulty, danger or unpleasantness, skill, and so on, it must be expected to command different rewards. Were this not the case, it would be exceedingly difficult for any economy that depended on the market to organize its production effectively. If skilled labor were paid no more than common labor, there would neither be any incentive for factory managers to economize on the former, nor much incentive for workers to undertake training that would ordinarily lead to a higher income.

Hence there are powerful reasons why a market society, socialist or other, must use a hierarchy of remunerations. But whereas this solves the problem of efficiency, it raises awkward questions of ideology. Is a society that permits or deliberately encourages differentials in income truly "socialist"? Is not the moral basis of socialism impaired when one man, who happens to be more adept or intelligent, is allowed to enjoy a higher standard of living than one who is not, although the latter may be more loving, or loyal, or more dedicated to the ideals of socialism?

If these questions should be brushed aside as smacking of impractical idealism, there is another reason to fear the inequality of rewards—to wit, that in allowing income differences to exist, a socialist society will be reintroducing, wittingly or otherwise, the very institution of class privilege against which it presumably struggles. At least in the eyes of some socialist critics, the emergence of a genuinely autonomous market sector (as in Yugoslavia) signals nothing less than a "peaceful transition from socialism to capitalism." The fear of these theoreticians is that the recrudescence of the profit motive as the driving force of society will lead inexorably to the reconstitution of the factory manager as capitalist and to the reenslavement of the worker to the wage system.† And beyond these particular institutional threats lurks the still more profound fear that the very existence of market relationships constitutes in itself a source of "corruption" for a socialist society. "Market relationships," writes Paul Sweezy, a leading socialist critic of market socialism, "are *inevitable* under socialism for a long time, but they constitute a standing danger to the system, and unless strictly hedged in and controlled will lead to degeneration and retrogression."**

To these charges not all socialists would agree. The Yugoslavs, for example, point out that in their system the factory manager is legally subservient to Workers Councils elected from the factory floor and empowered with full directors' rights over the manager, including the right to fix his salary or to fire him. Other socialists would argue that a certain amount of economic inequality is compatible with socialism, provided that it does not bring with it political or social inequality. As for the matter of corruption, that is a question we shall look into ourselves later on.

Thus it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to decide the merits of this controversy now. On the one hand, it is clear that socialism is being steadily forced to retreat from the centralized planning that was its original ideal: "It is plain at the present day," writes the Canadian sociologist and socialist, T. B. Bottomore, "that the public ownership of industry is not by itself sufficient to establish a socialist society, and that it may in fact produce conditions which are directly inimical to the creation or functioning of such a society."‡ At the same time there seems as well to be a rise of a "capitalist spirit" in Yugoslavia, and the probable consequences of Russian decentralization in giving new power to the class of Soviet industrial managers have been frequently commented on.***

All this suggests that socialism has yet to make its peace either with the market system or with centralized control. Perhaps one had better use the Marxian terminology and point out that there are "contradictions" as deeply rooted in the institutions and ideology of socialist planning as those lodged in the operations of a capitalist market system—contradictions that will not be resolved as long as socialism must be concerned both with the workaday problems of production and distribution in a world of scarcity on the one hand, and with its pursuit of the ideals of human equality and confraternity, on the other.

V

BUT WILL NOT this contradiction be resolved by the "abolition" of scarcity? It has become a commonplace to point out that science and technology constitute the truly revolutionary force of our day. Is not the *social* aspect of that revolution the impending end of the age of scarcity through the immense abun-

* See A. P. Lerner, *The Economics of Control,* Chapter 3.

†Not the least interesting aspect of this controversy is the abandonment of the traditional Marxist belief that the movement from capitalism to socialism was a "one-way street." The admission that the trend toward socialism is reversible, even if only for a while, constitutes a profound challenge to the classical Marxian analysis of historical evolution.

**_Monthly Review,_ March 1969, p. 12, author's italics. See also "Peaceful Transition from Socialism to Capitalism?," *Monthly Review,* March 1964, and the exchange between Bettelheim and Sweezy, *ibid.,* March 1969. Also Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory,* p. 655.

‡ "Industry, Work and Socialism" in *Socialist Humanism,* Erich Fromm, ed., p. 362.

***See, for example, the essays in *Planning and the Market in U.S.S.R. in the 1960s* by Balinky, Bergson, Hazard & Wiles.

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dance that a completely technologized society will enjoy?*

That scientific technology has the capability of vastly raising the level of productivity and thereby ushering in an era of material abundance is beyond doubt. But just as this very abundance, with its scientific and technological preconditions, poses deep-seated challenges for the maintenance of the traditional structure of capitalism,† so I also believe that it holds equally profound difficulties for the prevailing realities or conceptions of socialism.

The challenges to socialism as well as to capitalism are of two kinds: psychological and organizational. With capitalism, the psychological problem lies in the likelihood that affluence will weaken the condition of economic dependency on which the market system is tacitly based, opening the prospect that normal differentials of income payments will no longer suffice to attract men to less desirable jobs, and thereby requiring that capitalism resort more and more to planning and coercion. Much the same motivational problem is likely also to affect the operation of a socialist market economy, pushing it, however unwillingly, in the direction of coercive planning, with all the difficulties of efficiency and morale that such measures must bring.

These psychological problems are apt to be less important, however, than the organizational necessities imposed on socialism by the domination of science and technology. There is a romantic tendency on the part of some socialists to picture the age of science as inherently favorable to the egalitarian aims of the socialist ideology. But this is not in fact what the hegemony of science promises. For both the production and the maintenance of the scientific mastery of the New Society will require the presence of a highly trained research elite supported by a large technical service staff. This necessary organizational core, with its collective expertise so essential for the maintenance of the general society, has all the attributes of a potential ruling class. "There is nothing to be gained," writes Radovan Richta, head of a Czech interdisciplinary team for research into the social implications of the scientific revolution, "by shutting our eyes to the fact that an acute problem of our age will be to close the profound cleavage in industrial society which, as Einstein realized with such alarm, places the fate of the defenseless mass in the hands of an educated elite, who wield the power of science and technology. Possibly this will be among the most complex undertakings facing socialism."**

Is elitism inherent in a society dominated by scientific technology? Certainly the underlying conditions for a highly stratified social system are implicit in the pyramidal educational requirements and the vastly differing social powers of the technologized society in which many will tend automated machines and a few will carry on the critical activity of discovery. "Ultimately," writes Richta, "the only solution will be to make professionals of us all"—a solution that reminds us of pious suggestions in our society that everyone should become a capitalist.

BUT EVEN IF the tendency toward elitism is successfully curbed, there remains one final challenge for socialism posed by technology. It is that the hastening pace of technical change has begun to pose a wholly new problem for all mankind—the problem of maintaining the ecological balance, the very viability, of the earth itself.

For the other side of the coin of affluence has been a steady deterioration in the quality of the environment—a deterioration brought about by enormously enhanced demands for resources, by gigantic scales of physical and chemical transformation of materials, and by the need to dispose of gargantuan quantities of end-products, including the peculiarly lethal ones of radioactive wastes. Meanwhile, as the proliferation of production spoils the environment, it also makes possible the support of larger and larger concentrations of humanity, which in turn exacerbates the pollution process.

This spectacle of a steadily worsening environment coupled with an unsustainable rate of population increase gives rise to the uncomfortable feeling that the technological process is "running wild." And so it is. For at bottom, the ecological disequilibrium only reflects a still more profound unbalance between the technological and scientific capabilities of society and its social and self-governing capacities. The problem is that the first are cumulative and the second are not: each generation of scientists and technicians stands on the shoulders of preceding generations, bringing to the control over nature successively larger powers, whereas each generation of statesmen or administrators begins, for all intents and purposes, from scratch, in no way enhanced by the activities of its predecessors in understanding or controlling social processes. In its paradigm, of course, we have the spectacle of the unbelievable magnification of the capabilities of mass weaponry which is placed in the charge of men who are in no way whatsoever enlarged in their capability to govern, or even to understand, the world.

In this unequal race, which is visible in the socialist nations quite as much as in the capitalist ones, inevitably the technical capacities of a society come to exceed by an enormous margin its capabilities for exercising effective social control.

* For a recent (pre-invasion) Czech statement of this prospect, see Radovan Richta, *Civilization at the Crossroads, Social and Human Implications of the Scientific and Technological Revolution*, Prague, 1969. Cf. also Mandel, *op. cit.*, Chapters 16-17.

† See *The Limits of American Capitalism*, Part III.

** Richta, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

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The result is a technology that continuously escapes confinement, that develops in unforeseen directions, and that disturbs social systems by exerting its influences in unanticipated and unwelcome ways, such as the poisoning of the environment. It may well be that socialism will cope with this looming problem more effectively than capitalism, for assuredly planning lies at the very center of an effort to reestablish a workable balance between man and nature. The point is, however, that the technological imperative will present socialist planning with a range of problems requiring extensive and penetrative social intervention, rather than with a condition of general affluence in which a "liberated" community will spontaneously establish itself.

It is difficult at this juncture to foresee exactly what programs of control will be required to bring about a balanced ecology. All that can be said is that stringent limitations will have to be imposed, not alone on the productive apparatus of society, but very possibly on its consumptive patterns and certainly on its reproductive freedom. This will pose enormous problems for all social systems, but in the case of socialism the problem takes on a special significance. For the fact is that the known techniques of social planning do not today enable us to assert a mastery over the behavior of large communities—at least not if this mastery is to be made compatible with a high degree of civil liberty. Nor, for that matter, can we as yet even design a reliable program for the guidance of the advanced countries that carries the compelling logic of a socialist program for the underdeveloped countries. The sobering conclusion is that socialism will find its task made not easier but more difficult by the demands and consequences of the technological revolution on which it pins so many of its hopes.

VI

We have dealt at some length with the particular problems that seem likely to trouble the future of socialism by virtue of the inherent "contradictions" of socialist planning. Now we must examine a second group of problems more closely associated with the content of the socialist ideology.

Here it will be useful if we once again begin with a comparison of socialism and capitalism. We have already noted at the very beginning of this essay the essentially conservative purpose of the ideology of capitalism. By defining and articulating a consensus of business beliefs, a capitalist ideology serves to mark out the boundaries of "what can be done" within a system whose fundamental commitment is to leaving things alone. The result is twofold. On the one hand, the business ideology acts to limit the interventory reach of the state as an agency for social change. On the other, by buttressing the nature of things as they are, it risks leaving society without any feeling of forward motion, of collective purpose, of high destination. Except perhaps in late 19th- and early 20th-century America—certainly not in America today—the capitalist ideology has always had a practical, not an inspirational, appeal.

A totally different quality strikes us when we examine the ideology of the socialist world. Here the commitment to equality and to fraternal solidarity serves not to inhibit but to encourage the exercise of social intervention. And beyond that, the socialist vision of a transcendent society has shown itself to be second only to religion (if indeed second it be) as a source of inspiration, solace, and conviction.

Moreover, the nature of that extraordinary power of socialist ideas is not difficult to discover. Again in sharp contrast with the indifference of capitalist thought with regard to the matter, socialism has always affirmed its unshakable faith in the perfectibility of man. That is, socialism has always maintained that man is the product of his environment, so that the ugliness of society today or yesterday becomes an indictment, not of mankind, but of its past or prevailing institutions. Furthermore—and this is the crux of the charismatic power of socialist thought—it follows that in a society in which the deforming institutions of the past and present were removed, man would be "shaped" or "released" to discover his long-delayed fulfillment.

Thus, whereas capitalist thought has little to say about the future, other than to promise a general affluence, socialist thought envisages the transformation, indeed the liberation, of man:

> By abolishing commodity production and opening the age of plenty, socialist society will give the signal for an extraordinary flowering of the human personality. Among hundreds of millions of individuals who today are indistinguishable in one gray mass, this personality will awaken, develop and flower in a thousand different directions, as yet unknown and unsuspected. Released from the wretched servitude of having to struggle for daily bread, human energy will be concentrated in art and science, in education and in physical and mental well-being. The place of competition between individuals for material existence will be taken by emulation in the pursuit of aims of research, of beauty and truth. Aggressiveness will be sublimated into creative purposes.*

That such a vision should have the power to motivate mankind is understandable enough. And yet we can see at the same time the problems inherent in such a view. One of them, which we have already examined, is a failure to confront with unflinching honesty the social constraints and organizational requirements of the society of abundance. The second, to which we now turn, is the failure to examine with equal fearlessness

* Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 672.

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how man would actually behave in his "liberated" state.

There is no doubt as to how socialists would like him to behave. "What exactly is to be considered by *liberated man*?" asks one socialist writer. She describes him as follows:

> One might say that the liberated man is the generous and disinterested man; he is also a creative man, who can express his personality and talents in a creative action without constraint, whether in manual, intellectual, or artistic work, or in his relations and friendship with other men. The free man is one who feels himself at the same time fully himself and in accord with other men. He is an individual without idols, dogmas, prejudices or *a priori* ideas. He is tolerant, inspired by a profound sense of justice and equality, and aware of himself as being at the same time an *individual* and a *universal* man.*

The difficulty with such a description is obvious enough. As the critics of socialism have maintained since the day of the Utopian Socialists, this vision of man, however appealing, lacks a sense of toughness, of realism. In the language of the 19th century it was faulted because it was based on an inadequate appreciation of "human nature," and whereas we are more chary of such phrases nowadays, we also sense a certain wishfulness in this delineation of what man could be. The point, let me emphasize, is not to counter the socialist vision with mutterings that man is vile. It is rather to insist that the deepest weakness of its vision has been its failure to formulate a conception of human behavior in all its historical, sociological, sexual, and ideational complexity, a conception that would present "man" as being at once biologic as well as social, tragic as well as heroic, limited as well as plastic.

To this criticism, socialism has always returned two rejoinders. The first is that it is unfair to expect it to rest its philosophy on such a "theory" of human behavior without requiring at least as much of other social systems of belief. But this answer misses the point. In the first place, capitalism actually has such a theory, for it believes implicitly in the ubiquitous acquisitive and competitive nature of man. Second, capitalism does not require such a theory, for as with all social systems that rest content with the status quo, it takes "human nature" as it is—which is to say, it accepts the manifestations of the culture in which it finds itself, adapting its institutions to the prevailing character traits and behavioral characteristics of men rather than attempting to design a set of institutions that will nurture the essence of Man out of his imperfect prevailing self. And finally, in encouraging or acquiescing in these existing traits, capitalism does not claim that it is being more than expedient. "While minds are coarse they require coarse stimuli and let them have them," wrote J. S. Mill in his *Principles of Economics*. Only socialism, by virtue of its belief in the possibility of creating a liberating environment, requires an understanding of the ultimate nature of the human being whose innate capabilities must now be allowed to unfold.

To this critique, the socialist will offer his second rejoinder. It is that socialism does not try to discover or to nurture a "given," although heretofore stunted, germ of human character. Rather, it is a prime belief of socialism that man makes himself. Thus socialism can dispense with the need to formulate a conception of "human nature" by concentrating instead on the institutions by which that nature will be formed. In a word, human nature will be in the end what we want it to be.

But this rejoinder too misses the mark. For it ignores the very thing we wish to find out—that is, the extent to which man *can* make himself. So far as I know, only Herbert Marcuse has squarely faced the question of the ultimate limits of adaptability of man's psychobiologic makeup. In *Eros and Civilization* he has boldly argued that man's instinctual nature is capable of dramatic change in an environment of genuine abundance. In such a setting, Marcuse claims, where the historic pressures of material scarcity were finally lifted, the social need for the repression of man's narcissistic and erotic nature would no longer prevail, and Eros and the Nirvana principle could at long last take their places as the organizing elements of both the individual and the society.

Such a statement is indeed a theory of human nature, and if verified would place socialist ideology on a wholly new and much firmer footing. But I do not believe that there is any evidence, either theoretical or empirical, to support Marcuse's view of the instincts as creatures of the environment. As Sidney Axelrad has commented in the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*: "[I]nstincts are for Marcuse forces capable of being influenced by consciousness, rather than borderline somapsyche phenomena which are always unconscious and which can never lose their homeostatic functions and tendencies. [Marcuse's] prescription for a utopia of the future is not within the confines of psychoanalytic theory. It is a hope, an illusion. . . ."†

VII

THE ABSENCE of a satisfactory foundation of knowledge beneath the socialist conception of human nature is important not only because it blurs the long-term goals of socialism, but also because it carries short-term practical consequences of considerable importance.

* Mathilde Niel, "The Phenomenon of Technology," Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

† *Supra cit.*, January 1960, pp. 182, 184.

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The first of these is the failure of socialism to frame a coherent and cogent attitude toward the problem of motivation. Inherent in the distinction between "socialism" and "communism," for example—that is to say, between the society that a socialist government might inherit and one that it might make—is the deep-seated Marxist belief that man at a low level of culture and well-being will still require the motivation of invidious striving for monetary rewards, whereas once the high plateaus of a truly affluent society have been reached, it will be possible to discard these "bourgeois" traits and to move people by the famous principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Yet in actuality we perceive exactly the opposite state of affairs. In the poorest and lowliest of societies—China, Cuba, the first years of the Russian Revolution—we find the power of nonmaterial, noninvidious incentives to be greatest, whereas in the richer and more advanced socialist societies—Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, present-day Russia—we discover an increasing need to rely on incentives of monetary inequality, managerial preferment, and competitive vying.

Much of this inability to form a reliable theory of motivation harkens back to an ancient ambivalence toward wealth and its effect on the human personality that socialism has inherited from Western religious and philosophic thought. Socialism continually talks of affluence for society, but it recoils at the contagions that affluence will bring to the individual. An instance in point is the justification of the expropriation of 55,000 small businesses in Cuba in March 1968. As the Havana newspaper *Granma* explained, this action was needed to remove "nests of parasites, hotbeds of corruption, illegal trading and counter-revolutionary conspiracy":

> To get a good idea of the degree of corruption spawned by these activities, we need only cite the results of the investigation made by the Party of private businesses in Metropolitan Havana. According to this report, twenty-seven percent of the proprietors were workers before setting themselves up in business (and the great majority of these sprang up after the triumph of the Revolution). . . . It is intolerable that a worker, whose labor may benefit the whole people, should become a potential bourgeois, a self-centered money-grubber and exploiter of his countrymen.*

Such sentiments speak volumes as to the consequences of the psychological views which socialism expounds. If the rise of a worker to the precarious status of a small shopkeeper is enough to endanger the sentiments and institutions on which socialism is based, then socialism must constantly live in fear of betrayal from the secret corruptibility of the people. The parallel with the paranoid purity of extreme religious sects is all too apparent, and in one case as in the other, the vehemence with which evidences of corruption are denounced leads to the suspicions that both movements fear these "corruptions" are deeply embedded in the human psyche.

No less important as a consequence of the uncertain socialist conception of human behavior is its failure to examine the nature and consequences of alternative motivations to those of material incentives. If socialism seeks to perfect man in an environment in which the cash nexus will no longer provide the cohesive force for social organization, it must offer other motivations that will secure the necessary cooperation of a complex society. Such nonmaterial incentives certainly exist—monastic orders, for instance, maintain their internal discipline by relying on wholly different motives of personal enlistment from those of a money-oriented society, as do military establishments and some kinds of professional groups.

WHAT REMAINS unasked, however, is whether a society knit together by such ties—a society in which a strict internalization of discipline has supplanted the external sanctions of the marketplace—would constitute a favorable environment for the perfection of man. In this regard, the famous quotation of John Stuart Mill bears repetition:

> The question is whether there would be any asylum left for individuality of character; whether public opinion would not be a tyrannical yoke; whether the absolute dependence of each on all, and the surveillance of each by all, would not grind all down into a tame uniformity of thoughts, feeling, and actions.†

In a word, socialist thought, in its avoidance of a study of human behavior, has not directly faced the problem of how the individual is to be integrated into the community, or the degree to which individual behavior must be governed by social norms, or the appropriate boundaries between social and private spheres of existence. A fervent commitment to "participatory democracy" is today much voiced among Western socialist writers, but little or no consideration has been given to the means by which this participation can avoid what one commentator has called "the merciless masochism of community-minded and self-regulating men and women."** (Oscar Wilde once remarked that socialism would take too many evenings, and the quip deserves to be taken seriously.)

Finally, the inadequacy of the socialist grasp of behavior reveals itself in the ferocious impa-

* Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, *Socialism in Cuba*, p. 137.

† *Principles of Economics*, Book II, Chapter I, 3.

** The phrase is Melvin Tumin's, quoted in "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen," by Michael Walzer, *Dissent*, May/June 1968. The remark by Wilde is quoted in the same article.

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tience with which socialism demands that "human nature" must change. The relinquishment of market incentives, for example, is not regarded as a goal to be achieved over several decades but one that must be sought within a single generation; motives of socialist cooperation are not viewed as behavioral patterns to be patiently inculcated over a number of generations, but attitudes that must be evidenced almost overnight. What lacks so fatally in this view is any appreciation of the depth of behavioral characteristics formed by social experience and of the power of family cultures to transmit these learned patterns of attitude and behavior despite the counter-influences of organized social pressure. Hence, the repeatedly demonstrated unpreparedness of socialist thought before such behavioral realities as the persistence of "Russian" traits of government or "Chinese" xenophobia.

Here the dangers are twofold. On the one hand, the forces of nationalism—surely the single most powerful molding influence on social behavior in our time—are ignored, or worse, incorporated into socialist thought: as Paul Henri Spaak has observed, "The thing that socialists have learned to nationalize best is socialism."* On the other, there is the grave risk that the innocent inertia of ordinary behavior will be interpreted as a deliberate betrayal of socialist ideals. The Cuban incident above is a case in point.

VIII

THESE REFLECTIONS must now be placed in some final perspective. That socialism faces inherent problems springing from the difficulties of planning and from both the reach and the limitations of its ideology is, I think, undeniable. What is necessary is to confront these problems without a sense of either defeat or satisfaction. To examine the future of socialism, in the underdeveloped areas or in the advanced nations, without taking into account these, or perhaps other, challenges it must face is simply not to take socialism seriously—that is, as a political movement which must struggle with the intransigent realities of history and which, like all such movements, is likely to be bested by some of them.

In this struggle, two main resistances can be discerned. One of these is the rampant force of technology with its new networks of interdependence, its new frontiers of physical and chemical potentiality, its new dangers. In our day, at least, technology will not make its peace with socialism; socialism will have to make its peace with technology. The other is the stubborn inertia of the social personality, no doubt capable of great change, but only slowly and painfully, exerting meanwhile a continuous counterpressure against the radical alterations in actions and attitudes that socialism seeks to bring.

As we have suggested, it is likely that these resistances will establish the "limits" of socialism over the foreseeable future, much as similar forces set the boundaries of possible capitalist adaptation. But it would be wrong to end this essay on such a note. For unlike capitalism, which exists largely for its own sake in the present, socialism exists largely for the sake of the future. Inherent in the indistinct but bright vision of perfectible man is the source of an evolutionary momentum that carries a precious freight of human aspiration. Thus, unlike capitalism, socialism contains a core of belief that should be capable of maintaining its power to move human beings despite the obstacles that will hamper its performance.

Socialism is, at its root, the effort to find a remedy in social terms for the affront to reason and morality in the status quo. As such it is not limited to any particular place or time in history, but adapts its programs and its objectives to the indignities against which it fights. Thus, if socialism today in the United States derives its impetus from the spectacle of concentrated wealth, the commercial manipulation of human beings, or the indifference of the established power structure to the plight of the poor or the Negro, in the Soviet Union a genuinely socialist movement would (and some day will) take its organizing impulse from the concentration of political power and from the imprisonment of mind and spirit by Communist authorities and doctrines alike. In each and every nation the presence of power and privilege thus establishes the fortresses against which socialism presses its attack.

It may well be that each attack succeeds only to fail; that new walls of power and privilege are built as rapidly as old ones are torn down; that the ultimate goal of a transformed—indeed, transfigured—man is only a chimera. Yet the vitality of socialism seems unlikely to be daunted by that possibility. For taking socialism seriously means more than acknowledging its difficulties as a political movement. It means understanding as well that socialism is the expression of a collective hope for mankind, its idealization of what it conceives itself to be capable of. When the fires of socialism no longer burn, it will mean that mankind has extinguished that hope and abandoned that ideal.

* Quoted in "Humanistic Socialism and the Future" by Norman Thomas, in Fromm, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

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The End of Culture

John Thompson

Wonders are many on earth, the greatest is man.
. . . The use of language, the wind-swift motion of brain
He learned; found out the laws of living together
In cities, building him shelter against the rain
And wintry weather . . . .

—Sophocles, *Antigone*
(adapted from the translation by E. F. Watling)

ART, THE ARTS, "high culture," has lost its hold on us. We are still wedded, I suppose, us and the arts, but we live with them unaroused, unenthralled. Few of us may be aware of this, as yet, but I think many of us feel it, if only as a rather puzzling boredom or a kind of laziness that keeps us away from the galleries and concert halls and theaters we used to haunt; or we wonder, as our magazine subscriptions lapse one by one, why there don't seem to be so many exciting novels and poems appearing anymore.

Here I must interject that I would fight to the death (figuratively speaking) to maintain that we have living among us poets and novelists and other artists who will join as their peers, on the slopes of Parnassus, Homer and Dante, Melville and Rimbaud, and their fellows in the other arts as well. But it is not the same, as they themselves will readily acknowledge when they reach their final home among the Muses, and when their ancient peers offer them comfort and manly condolence such as will have been offered to the artists of no other age—nor will any other artists ever have been offered the special crown of bays our artists will have for their unique heroism.

To return: nor do our offspring lust after paintings or sculptures or books of verse or opera tickets the way we did when we were young. I take it that movies, television, and popular music are something else, diversions like smoking cigarettes.

I am speaking, of course, only of those of us who really did lust terribly after those things, who, as youths, as soon as we discovered them found the arts to be at least as important as anything else in our lives, probably in fact more important than anything else: much more fixed in our hearts, for instance, much more certainly a part of our future, than any one particular person we might be in love with. For us, marriage, money, family, while probably we wanted these things just as anyone else wanted them, were still things we could have only if the conditions of having them allowed for our pursuit of the arts. This was so, whether we aspired to be some kind of artists ourselves or to be students or collectors or critics or simply serious fans. We couldn't have lived without art. It may have been, of course, only one art, to the exclusion of all the others, although usually painters felt some kinship to poets and musicians and their works, novelists went to the ballet, and so on. Instructors in English skimped on whiskey and books to buy lithographs and phonograph records. This was no pastime, no hobby or consolation. Only thus did the chaos of life make any sense at all.

If among my readers are any of those artists and lovers of art, they will now be protesting, as one party of a long old marriage might gallantly protest, "But I do love her." And to be sure there may be truth in this, too—but not much passion. Others, exempt from whatever it is that has overcome the rest of us, may in truth still be really as passionate as ever, or more passionate even: there is always a remnant, just as the pygmies may survive our hydrogen war. But isn't there something in the air?

What has seemed eternal does sometimes lose heart and strength and mind, and fail. The best heads of Europe were once passionately engaged in religion, only thus could they live. Some few still are thus engaged. And no doubt there are more churches than there ever were. But since Darwin at least, if not since long before, most religious discussion, most religious art, has been about its losses. Who would claim religion is still

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a dominant force in the lives of most of us, of wise men, fools, intellectuals, artists, soldiers, governors and governed, as for so many centuries it was, as it was for even the atheists?

Such musings as these struck me four or five years ago in a rather strange connection which I hope to explain further on. I was reading Noam Chomsky's linguistics and began to wonder first why it is we have so much mental resistance to many fundamental questions and answers about language (Chomsky is tough sledding), and then I wondered what would happen if some day he really succeeded in doing what he said he would, that is, to explain fully how it is that we learn language and what the incredibly complex and hidden rules are that allow us, normally without even thinking of it, to produce only and all English sentences, as he says, with "all" being nothing short of infinity. I talked some about this, now and then, and about the related matters I want to write of here, without obtaining much more than puzzlement from most of those who heard me. But now something seems to be in the air.

The quotations I have scattered about in this essay are only some signs of it, of what is in the air. They are not meant to be proofs of what is unprovable. They tend in their sources to the journalistic, they are not even appeals to authority: just straws in the wind. All I say here is speculative, imperfectly informed, and, I believe, true.

II

In short, the structure of particular languages may very well be largely determined by factors over which the individual has no conscious control and concerning which society may have little choice or freedom. On the basis of the best information now available, it seems reasonable to suppose that a child cannot help constructing a particular sort of transformational grammar to account for the data presented to him, any more than he can control his perception of solid objects or his attention to line and angle. Thus it may well be that the general features of language structure reflect, not so much the course of one's experience, but rather the general character of one's capacity to acquire knowledge—in the traditional sense, one's innate ideas and innate principles. It seems to me that the problem of clarifying this issue and sharpening our understanding of its many facets provides the most interesting and important reason for the study of descriptively adequate grammars and, beyond this, the formulation and justification of a general linguistic theory that meets the condition of explanatory adequacy. By pursuing this investigation one may hope to give some real substance to the traditional belief that "the principles of grammar form an important, and very curious, part of the philosophy of the the human mind" (Beattie, 1788).

—Noam Chomsky
Aspects of the Theory of Syntax

When we are from six months to twelve months old, we all say our first word.* At about eighteen months, we put words together and say things like "Push car." This is more than a mere saying of two words. We make a syntactic construction of the words, with every phonetic device that marks complex utterances in our language, showing that at the deepest level of understanding we have put things together. At the level of phonology, we alter the stress pattern and pitch and juncture patterns of the words into the contour of sound that indicates a phrase. We know how to subordinate the stress that "push" would have as a complete utterance, how to lower its pitch in relation to "car," how to place the terminal contour at the end of "car."

And then, after a while, by the time we are three years old, many of us already know how to use all the major varieties of simple sentences up to a length of ten or eleven words.

We understand syntax. Our very errors prove this: we may say, "I digged a hole," which shows we know how past tense is usually indicated in English, although we will never have heard an adult say just that. None of us ever says, "I a hole digged," or, "Digged hole I a." At three, we know more than we can ever explain, no matter how wise and educated we become; the greatest intellectual performance of our lives is "the fantastic feat," as Paul Postal has said, "by which a child with almost no direct instruction learns that enormously extensive and complicated system which is a natural language, a system which has thus far defied the efforts of the best students to describe it in anything like a complete or adequate way."

The dominant view of how this happens seems now to be not the behaviorist's, that bit by bit we echo what we hear, learning habits as rats learn to go through a maze. Rather it seems that we learn, as Chomsky says in the quotation above, through the general character of our innate capacity; and it seems that this capacity must be based on specific developments in the structure of our brains. These provide us with the deep forms of language, which may be the same for all languages, and they make it possible for us to recognize and manipulate the particular rules that dictate how we encode and decode the few particular sounds of our own language—never more than around fifty—into a signalling system that can carry a traffic of communication about anything in the universe. Bright or dull, we all accomplish this, except for those few so terribly deprived or damaged that in other ways as well as this they cannot enter human society.

* This is drawn from Roger Brown and Ursula Bellugi, "Three Processes in the Child's Acquisition of Syntax," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXXIV, No. 2 (Spring 1964).

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III

The most primitive peoples known, whose only tools are of wood, bone, and crudely shaped stones, and who live in very small groups governed primarily by familial relationships, possess fully developed languages that are in every essential respect perfectly comparable to such languages as English, French, German, or Chinese.

—Harry Hoijer, "The Origin of Language"
Linguistics Today

Some apes, birds, porpoises, other animals, have systems of calls. These are closed repertories, one complete call for each situation, invariable. Only man has language, an open system with an infinite range, made up both of learned patterns and also, it would seem, of innate patterns of the mind. Only man can say new things. This quality of productivity is lacking in the call systems of animals.

Our language, furthermore, has the ability of displacement, we can talk about things remote in time and space. We can talk about things that happened before we were born, or elsewhere, or which have not happened yet, or things that never will. We accomplish this range within our limited set of sounds by duality of patterning: "I hit him" is distinguished from "I bit him" by one phonological item. Thus our set of signals is very limited but at the same time it is capable of transmitting an infinity of messages. There is no limit to the number of possible sentences.

Finally, our language, as opposed to call systems, is perpetuated through traditional transmission. We are born with the general faculty but we learn the particular language of our tribe. Calls are apparently largely transmitted directly by the genes, with some traces of "cultural" transmission yet to be understood. As we learn language, we are learning also other parts of our culture. It is just at this time that in our civilization, for instance, we learn toilet training, learn to shun the waste products of our body rather than to love them, and learn other taboos also. These, like language learning, are an acquisition of the unconscious, bound up there with all our potent natural urges. Their rationale, even the largest part of their very possession, is not available to our thought and we resent any attempts by ourselves or others to make these possessions conscious—although we love to tease ourselves about this, as we do with dirty jokes. Many of us retain all our lives a deep unease if someone, like an English teacher or a social superior, wants to tamper actively with what we learned when we were two and three. And many of us retain a corresponding unease in the presence of anyone who learned something slightly different at two or three.

Somehow language appeared among men. Perhaps, as Charles F. Hockett and Robert Ascher have proposed,* it was in large part an evolutionary development, with each stage having survival value. (Some anthropologists and linguists, like George L. Trager, deny this, and say language was an *invention*, subsequent to the evolutionary development of mankind—an invention followed by all other cultural inventions, exogamy, the wheel, music, everything that does not exist in nature other than human nature.)

Perhaps language came first through a blending of calls. On some prehistoric occasion, say in an urgency requiring a call to indicate the presence of food and also one for the presence of danger, only a part of each call was made. The parts perhaps thus became available for blending with other calls and parts of other calls. Thus vocal communication gained a crude kind of productivity. The elaboration of calls, assisted by biped life on the open savannas rather than in the forests, by hand-carrying that freed the mouth, encouraged traditional transmission. And with that came, in learning and teaching, displacement; for teaching cannot always occur in the real situation. Meanwhile, strengthening further the family group, and reinforced by the system of calls, frontal sexual intercourse may have encouraged the assimilation of the male into the tenderness the female felt for her child; and with this, also, and with increased interest in providing for the future, as in carrying weapons rather than improvising them for each new occasion, may have come the male's wish for exclusive possession of females—and jealousy. . . .

And perhaps then, fifty thousand, a hundred thousand years ago, somewhere on the eastern plains of Africa, the human brain appeared. It had the capacity to recognize the smaller units of sound within the blended calls, and, we do not know how, the ability to pattern these; and we had human language.

Finally Hockett and Ascher say this:

"The crucial developments must have taken place once, and then spread. . . . The human revolution, completed before the diaspora, established a state of affairs in which further change and adaptation could be effected, within broad limits, by tradition rather than genetics. That is why human racial diversity is so slight, and it is why the languages and cultures of all communities, no matter how diverse, are elaborations of a single inherited 'common denominator.' "

This notion seems to me to present us with consequences and possibilities of the utmost gravity, and we shall now have to imagine ourselves returned to that one time and that one place. And we shall have to call to mind, even in the absurdly cursory allusion to it I can manage here, all that has happened to us since; we shall have to

* "The Human Revolution," *Current Anthropology*, V, No. 3 (June 1964).

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try and see what is happening to us now and what the future holds.

IV

Contrary to the old belief that men anatomically like ourselves slowly invented culture, it is probable, in other words, that the increase in the size of the human brain occurred simultaneously with the first phases in the unfolding of human culture. Man and his culture evolved simultaneously, as it were, through a complex series of feedback processes.

—René Dubos, "Humanistic Biology"
American Scholar, Spring 1965

ATTEMPTING TO solve the puzzle of the two omnipresent but apparently unrelated features of totemism, that is, the widespread custom of organization of "primitive" men into clans dominated by an animal or force of nature regarded as the powerful ancestor of the clan's members, and then the equally widespread and associated law of exogamy forbidding sexual relations between clan members, Freud supposed a single event whose consequences these manifestations reproduced. Frazer, Reinach, Atkinson, Robinson Smith, and many others had collected instance after instance but had never quite been able to put together these two phenomena, totemism and exogamy. Freud did put them together, in a way that was subsequently often attacked or ignored by anthropologists. It is my impression that the present reputation of Freud's theory among collectors of annals of the primitive is somewhat higher. As for me, I believe that all man's history confirms it.

What he said, based on the assembled evidence of Frazer and the others, on a speculation of Darwin's about the social organization of prehistoric man (rule by a violent, jealous father who keeps all the females for himself and drives away the growing sons), and on the insights of psychoanalysis into man's imaginative powers and necessities, was this. It is very brief:

> One day the expelled brothers joined forces, slew and ate the father, and thus put an end to the father horde. Together they dared and accomplished what would have remained impossible for them singly. Perhaps some advance in culture, like the use of a new weapon, had given them the feeling of superiority. Of course these cannibalistic savages ate their victim. This violent primal father had surely been the envied and feared model for each of the brothers. Now they accomplished their identification with him by devouring him and each acquired a part of his strength. The totem feast, which is perhaps mankind's first celebration, would be the repetition and commemoration of this memorable, criminal act with which so many things began, social organization, moral restrictions and religion.

You will have seen by now that we can supply the missing element for Freud, "some advance in culture, like the use of a new weapon. . ." It was language.

Only once, and in one place, the father of us all was born, born with his new enormous head. The long process of evolution, favoring those hominoids who had left the forests where the ancestors of the gorilla kept their herbivorous and mild-mannered permissiveness—who had been left rather by the forests, some say—these children of the apes, waifs of the plains, had at last produced a creature who could distinguish those small elements of sound in the cries and could order them, through duality of pattern and the still secret channels of his brain, into speech. His sons, the sons of this primal horde where he enjoyed a monopoly of the females, inherited this capacity. Before he drove them out, away from his women, he taught them language, and his profit on it was that they killed him. With speech, they could plan this, they could draw up their pact, the pact of culture. They would not struggle against one another for a monopoly of power and females. They would fight all others, all those without language (and later, after the inevitable diaspora, all those with different languages). They would observe in fear and piety, and in self-protection, his old incest taboos. But most of all, what interests us most of all—because of their love for him that accompanied their hate, and the feelings of guilt this so heavily laid upon them, they relieved their remorse by re-enacting the crime at the totem feast. They brought the father back to life, they worshiped him again and killed him again, suffered again their loss, and celebrated their success.

In the totem feast, slaying an animal which had been given the spiritual qualities of the father, they disguised themselves as the totem, mimicked it in sound and movement. . . . They mourned, and then they burst out in loud festal gaiety, unchaining every impulse. . . . Surely it does not require a long exposition to recognize here "the beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art."

I started out with the arts, our various arts, somehow linked but, in our state of the game, disparately-celebrated parts of a strange "high culture." Once, we may suppose, they were all one, as still they are in many "simpler" societies. Just as the event was at once religious, political, and ethical, so the "arts" served the event together. Painting, sculpture, supplied the costumes and the setting; music, both instrumental and vocal, supplied the totemic imitation; poetry told the story and named the god and the suppliants, the killers; dance was the movement. It is a commonplace to say this today, whether of the early Greek drama or of the religious celebrations you can still see in the less favored lands of the earth.

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Even more commonplace is it to remark again and again the content, quite open or of a latency easily available, of our greatest dramas. We know all too well what lies behind the masterpieces of Sophocles and Shakespeare. "In closing this study, which has been carried out in extremely condensed form," so Freud said, near the end of *Totem and Taboo*, "I want to state the conclusion that the beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex."

V

The nation-state represents the complex of ideas that we identify as nationalism. The nationalistic thinking of those who made the French Revolution, of German philosophers contemporary with them, and later of the Mazzinis, the Michelets, and the Bismarcks, was the foundation of the nineteenth-century nation-state. One would expect the nation-state itself, however, to survive for a time after nationalism had diminished, if only as the dead tree in the forest remains standing. . . . Generations passed before it was possible to get the dead tree of the dynastic state out of the way, replacing it with the live new nation-state.

—Louis J. Halle, *The Society of Man*

RELIGION THERE is no need to discuss. The Mass is still celebrated, still commands in some faint degree the services of the arts, as it once commanded them all and commanded also the allegiance of the state and every other of the then-inseparable items of human culture; but it is over.

Society in the form of the state is in like condition: powerful, but as dead in spirit as monarchy was a hundred years ago. Nations can kill some of us still when they wish to, and may well kill us all, but who argues for them today? Once the best minds did so argue, and they argued themselves out of business. Of ethics, another in our list of those items, I will not speak, except to say that I do not know when there has been, within one civilization, so wide a diversity of notions about ethics, so scattered and feeble a general ethical system or theory.

There is another part of culture in addition to that which has to do with regulating the relations of human beings with one another, and that includes all those things we do to protect humanity against nature. Who would not smile to hear this today? We have been monstrously successful in subduing nature, so successful that we are now terrified of what we have done, and even fear our mortal end through this success, in the steady destruction of the oxygen and carbon dioxide balance of our air, in the poisoning of our lands and our seas. We hear the clamor and are unable to stop what we do.

All now depends on that first part of the pact, on the regulation of the relations of human beings among themselves. But what if the means for doing this, the means that all began with our first human act, have become withered, cut down, trampled, scattered, tossed to the winds?

Surely, though, things cannot be this bad. Or if they are, it is only a decline and fall around whose dumped columns and blocks the forms will somehow persist and then arise again. . . . How could it mean anything that some few of us, devotees of the arts of one small part of the world, could suppose that we were an advance guard into the wilderness for all humanity, for all those millions, those billions who are only just beginning to know the secular and disparate arts of "high" culture. . . .

VI

It may well be . . . that in art there is no such thing as progress. But then, criticism is only partially an art. . . . The criticism of poetry has of late acquired a rich consciousness which may be defined objectively as the self-consciousness of the medium—an historic acquisition that, acting as a force in its own right, has already considerably affected the writing of poetry and may be expected to affect it even more in the near future. . . . Let us keep in mind, though, that the sway of consciousness is by no means an unmixed blessing. At the heart of consciousness there is always equivocation. One can do no more than hope that this heightened and elaborated awareness of the poetic medium, which is after all a kind of wisdom or self-knowledge, will not soon provide us with another melancholy illustration of Hegel's famous dictum that the owl of Minerva begins its flight only when the shades of night are gathering. Not that I in the least associate myself with Edmund Wilson's thesis that verse is a "dying technique." Still, we know that in this world nothing comes free, and one wonders what the price of so intense a consciousness will turn out to be in this instance.

—Philip Rahv
The Myth and the Powerhouse

THERE IS no need to rehearse here the history of the arts, nor could I pretend to do it even if the need existed. Let me depend again upon your sense of things. Let me adduce only painting. In my preposterous telescoping of all human pre-history and history, where we stand within sight and hearing and touch of that poor old fellow who faced his sons in his camp in East Africa—with what words, with what Shakespearean phrases!—for he must have taught them, too, all the manliness that set them together against him—in all this, I suppose a continuous and unbroken tradition, or series of traditions; and no progress really, only times of splendor, times of misery.

Within the memory of men still living the old high arts have blown up in the face of Western civilization. This has come about through the

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radical transformation of the artist's understanding of his own techniques. As artists became conscious of their own techniques, technique itself became their subject; there was a gorgeous brief consuming efflorescence, a pyrotechnic explosion; and then it was over.

> Cézanne's art, now so familiar, was a strange novelty in his time. It lies between the old kind of picture, faithful to a striking or beautiful object, and the modern "abstract" kind of painting, a moving harmony of colored touches representing nothing. Photographs of the sites he painted show how firmly he was attached to his subjects; whatever liberties he took with details, the broad aspect of any of these landscapes is clearly an image of the place he painted and preserves its indefinable spirit. But the visible world is not simply represented in Cézanne's canvas. It is recreated through strokes of color among which there are many that we cannot identify with an object and yet are necessary for the harmony of the whole. If his touch of pigment is a bit of nature (a tree, a fruit) and a bit of sensation (green, red), it is also an element of construction which binds sensations or objects. The whole presents itself to us on the one hand as an object-world that is colorful, various, and harmonious, and on the other hand as the minutely ordered creation of an observant, inventive mind intensely concerned with its own process. . . . The principle is clear: to break up what lies on one plane; to write on the picture surface what lies at different depths. Through all these means and through the texture of the painting, the latter has become almost as distinct an object as any of the things it represents. . . . He believes—as most inventive artists after him cannot do without some difficulty or doubt—that the vision of nature is a necessary ground for art.*

Picasso and Braque, and then after them everyone, saw not that nature consisted of cubes, cones, and cylinders, but that painting consisted of the surface of the painting. Giotto, the cave-painters of Lascaux, the sculptors of Benin and of New Guinea, knew that their art demanded structure and design of the surface. All artists have always worked in cubes and cylinders, in arabesque and in coil. But around 1900, everything changed, and painting burst out in a period of magnificence unequalled since the Renaissance. Picasso recapitulated the history of art, in homage and parody; and strangely, the new separation of technique from subject allowed also a new freedom in subject, a new return to a kind of "literary" painting, as in Surrealism. And then it was over. As we so often say, we have something now, but it is not painting.

VII

Poetry, novels and short stories are singular antiques by which hardly anyone is deceived any longer. What's the use of turning out poems or stories? All that remains now is writing, writing by itself, groping one's way with words, searching and describing, meticulously, in depth, hanging on, hammering out reality, rejecting compromise.

—J. M. G. Le Clézio, *Fever*

Surely something happened with the novel as it did to painting: the refinement of technique (Flaubert) and then its isolation (Joyce), and then a great flowering—and then, something else. Commonplace, too, to say that when poets came to know only too well that poems are made of words, not of ideas, there was a flowering, a recapitulation, a fragmentation of brilliant pieces, and then—well, it would be too complicated to argue the case, if you do not sense it. We have brilliant poets, even great poets, I believe: perhaps because their medium is language itself, because language has not yet quite yielded all its secrets—language, the first and deepest and most necessary element in the pact we call human culture—poets still have a precarious authority.

VIII

One of the principal revolutions of spirit during the past fifty years has occurred in our view of language: language, the act and nature of verbal communications, has moved outwards from immediacy. It has become objectified: awareness examines and seeks to circumscribe it as it does other phenomena.

—"Society and the Structure of Language"
Times Literary Supplement, Nov. 10, 1966

One part after another of our old original pact, then, has been brought into consciousness, where it flares out in brief glory and then dries up, blows away. The brothers agreed to form a clan against all others. But today, only fifty thousand years later, there can be no others. How embarrassing to invoke the feeble pieties of "One World," but feeble as they are, they are true. The pact must be rewritten; what held us together, all but one thing, has gone for many people today; and although the others may die without ever feeling this loss, they will die because of it.

You will have seen by now what my surely rather comic and apocalyptic final notion is. The last remaining item of the pact is language. What will happen, what indeed, when this too is delivered into consciousness? What if our Chomskys really do dredge up into the light what every human child learns or commands as if by magic?

I do not know why consciousness should have this devastating effect on what it encompasses.

* Meyer Schapiro, *Paul Cézanne*, 1952.

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We are all familiar, of course, with the way consciousness of a motive, of the cause and effect of a feeling, can remove much of the power of that feeling, as when our guilt or our obsessions let loose their holds on us as we learn their true sources. Perhaps it is more than this. If thought is a symbolic substitute for action, and if language and thought are coterminous, then language itself substitutes for what action? Language is, as speech, an oral activity. Through language we were able to perform the first killing and devouring, and primarily through language we have celebrated this ritual ever since. . . . When language and thought become conscious, language itself will be devoured. And in this event, the old pact will be completely destroyed. We will be free to do as so many now urge us to do, to give up thought, to return to the state of our innocent friends the unspeaking animals, to recover if we can the strange instinctive pact they made each with their own kind so many ages ago.

Or we can destroy one another. We might wish there could be some record of this confrontation we are having with our own human nature, something to be salvaged—some being to salvage it as we have salvaged the first human confrontation of our old first father. But such records as we leave will not mean much to beings without language. If only I were slightly more apocalyptic, I should conjure up now the last man, as I have dreamed of the first, and he would speak the last words ever to be spoken. I would hope they might be worthy of his great ancestor.

When have people ever been so aware of their inheritance of cruelty, of their daily cruelties, their unending prospect of cruelties to come? No, this is not the Thirty Years War, most of us are secure, secure day by day in our unprecedented peril. But when have there ever been such universal agonies of guilt? We are riddled with guilt, to speak now only of Americans, leaving out of account the overwhelming guilts of Europe—but they are used to it. We are all aware now, as so few people were at the time, of the horror in our deliberate genocide of the American Indians from coast to coast. We live in horror of what we have done to the descendants of kidnapped Africans. Who ever before felt so much pain about his own history? This might well be remorse, which is suffering for real acts we regret: these things were actually done. But we didn't ourselves do them in our proper person, and so we feel guilt, a guilt with a deep and half-hidden spring, and guilt is harder to handle than remorse: it cannot be handled rationally, in consciousness.

We are riddled with guilt about our poverty and about our riches, about our victories in war and our defeats, about crime and about our punishment of it: about smoking, drinking, all our addictions, about sex. There seems to be nothing we are not told to feel guilty about and we respond always to these instructions, even if it is only to bluster that we are sick of it, we refuse to feel guilty. We are ashamed of our countryside and of our cities; in both we are drowning, as we did in our schoolboy jokes, in our own "effluent." We are guilty about our nurseries, our schools, our highways, our office buildings and our dwellings, our hospitals, our homes for old people, our funeral parlors. We are told to feel guilty about the manner in which our leaders persuade us to vote for them, and we do feel guilty about it. We are ashamed of our President, and our flag is a worldwide emblem of disgrace.

Who else ever suffered so much while growing fat on plunder from poor countries? Who else ever made a continent ugly and then suffered such dreadful remorse for it, a paralyzing remorse with no remedy? Our guilt is like a disease of the bone that makes every movement an agony, and so we cannot move.

Who will take our guilt and allow us to grieve and then to rejoice and be free? But we know how all those elements of the ancient ritual worked! And so they can't work any more, for us. We can only talk, and talk, and talk. And talk.

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Hebrew As She Is Spoke

Hillel Halkin

THE STORY was told me by an American who was traveling in Israel several years ago when his rented car began to stall. Suspecting (rightly, as it turned out) that the carburetor needed tuning, he pulled in at a gas station to look for a mechanic. He knew hardly any Hebrew, but having in his possession one of those foreign-language phrase books that specialize in emergencies of all kinds, he opened to the section on "going by car," found the appropriate phrase, and painstakingly read aloud to the attendant on duty: "A-NEE ho-SHEV sheh-YESH le-tah-KEHN et [I think an adjustment is needed in] hah-meh-ah-YEHD." The response was a blank stare. He tried again; again the same reaction. At which point, despairing of his obviously garbled diction, he lifted the hood of the car and pointed directly at the part in question. The mechanic was instantly enlightened. "Ah," he beamed, "ha-kahr-bu-RAH-tor!"—and the trouble was soon taken care of.

Usage can change quickly in Israel, and by now the word *me'ayed* (literally "vaporizer," from the Biblical *ed*, "vapor," which occurs in the plural form in the second chapter of Genesis) may circulate more widely, yet the incident does point to a reality of which not only the occasional tourist but any new resident of Israel who has had to struggle with the problem of communication is well aware, namely, that there are in fact two Hebrew languages in existence today, one that is supposedly spoken and one that generally is. The first, which is limited in its pure form to a small band of philological zealots, is among other things practically free of foreign loan-words, for which it substitutes a large assortment of native Hebraisms, some of ancient vintage, many recently coined. The second, on the other hand, is flooded with borrowings from abroad.

Hebrew has in effect led this double life ever since Jewish settlers in Palestine first began speaking it to each other for both ideological and practical reasons (among many of them, particularly Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim and non-Yiddish-speaking Sefardim, there was simply no other lingua franca) toward the end of the last century. Picking up the thread of a language that had last been natively spoken about fifteen-hundred years before their time* and that lacked hundreds of ordinary words and expressions without which everyday speech was all but impossible, they improvised where they were able to, and where they weren't, they borrowed heavily, each wave of immigrants adding from the languages it knew, French, Yiddish, Russian, German, Polish, etc., while increasingly from the period of the British Mandate on, they borrowed from English, which today accounts for the lion's share of the loan-words in modern Hebrew. When the founding father of the spoken Hebrew revival, Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1857-1922), established his Hebrew Language Committee in Jerusalem in 1890, its purpose was largely to modernize the holy tongue through the introduction of new vocabulary and to weed out the alien accretions that were already corrupting its native purity. Ben-Yehudah, a member of the Russian Social-Revolutionary party in his youth, who declared in later life that his love for Hebrew alone had saved him from complete assimilation, threw himself into the task of its restoration with a religious devotion that made him a semi-legendary figure in his lifetime—it is said that during the forty years he lived in

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* Exactly when the last native speakers of Hebrew in ancient Palestine lived and died is still a subject of scholarly debate. In the early days of higher criticism it was common to fix the date as far back as the age of Ezra and Nehemiah (ca. 450 BCE), when Hebrew, it was contended, was supplanted by the Aramaic brought back to Judea by the exiles returning from Babylonia. Today, on the other hand, it is widely believed that Hebrew continued to be spoken in at least isolated pockets of Judea until the end of the Mishnaic period (ca. 250 CE)—a judgment that would seem to the lay reader to be confirmed by the prose of the Mishnah itself, whose easy, almost conversational quality hardly suggests a "dead," purely literary idiom. Even as the latter, of course, Hebrew continued to grow and develop until modern times, but in an inevitably restricted manner. Although biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew differ considerably in many points of vocabulary and construction, and both in turn can be distinguished at a glance from the late 19th-century literary Hebrew from which modern Hebrew has developed, I shall here refer to all of the above as "classical Hebrew" in order to distinguish them jointly from the spoken Israeli Hebrew of today.

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Jerusalem he never once broke his vow to speak nothing but Hebrew to whoever understood even a few words of the language, regardless of whether his interlocutor chose to answer him in it or not. In less extreme form such zeal was not uncommon among settlers in Palestine, nor could Hebrew's rebirth—perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the entire Zionist venture—possibly be imagined without it. But to romantic nationalists like Ben-Yehudah, Zionism itself was unimaginable without Hebrew, that sleeping beauty which once awakened would again become a princess among tongues. From the very beginning *kibbush ha-lashon*, "the conquest of the language," ranked in Palestinian Zionist ideology alongside *kibbush ha-avodah*, "the conquest of labor," and *kibbush ha-adamah*, "the conquest of the soil." Every new word forged from an ancient root, every foreignism banished and replaced, was the equivalent of another house built by Jewish hands, another *dunam* of land reclaimed by Jewish toil.

Three-quarters of a century after Ben-Yehudah's language committee first met, however (in 1954 it was officially adopted by the government of Israel and renamed the Academy of Hebrew), and several decades since the conquest of Hebrew has been a clearly accomplished fact, the factors that determine whether a given coinage "takes" or fails to "take" in popular speech are still largely an enigma. Some of Ben-Yehudah's very first inventions caught on immediately and have been standard spoken Hebrew ever since, such as his word for newspaper, *iton* (from *et*, "time," modeled on the German *Zeitung*). Other neologisms fell on deaf ears for possibly predictable reasons. When the cumbersome compound *sachrachok** ("distance-speaker"), for example, was unsuccessfully proposed for *telefon*, early in the century, it suffered from being more difficult to inflect than the word it was meant to replace, which in addition had the advantage of enjoying international currency. On the other hand, take the unwieldy *buldózer*: not many years ago the handy acronym *dachpor* (from the verbs *dachof*, "to push," and *chafor*, "to dig") was offered in its stead, yet after a period of competition in the daily press, the arena where such contests are often first decided, *dachpor* has been all but bulldozed from sight. In yet other instances two rivals have battled to a standstill, as is the case with *auto* and *mechonit*, which are today more or less interchangeable. But whatever the explanation, the fact remains that a large number of the thousands of new words coined by both the Academy of Hebrew and other sources (some of the best of these have been the work of private authors) have failed to gain acceptance with the linguistic popular will and today survive only in the dictionaries, whose bulk they have visibly swelled.

* *ch* as in Ba*ch*.

If Hebraizing Hebrew were simply a matter of replacing a finite number of foreign terms that had crept into the language when its resistance was low, as it were, eliminating most of them would be merely a question of time. But linguistic borrowing is a culturally-determined phenomenon, and inasmuch as 20th-century mass culture is essentially a product manufactured and packaged in the West, and especially in the United States, the language of a "culture-importing" country like Israel is constantly forced to absorb new loan-words at a far faster rate than it can expel or digest the old ones. Here again the influence of English, the second language of all of Israel's schools and most of its younger intelligentsia, has been predominant, so that for every English word that has shown some sign of phasing itself out over the past decade, dozens of new ones from the American cornucopia have entered the speech of the average Israeli. Add to this sum occasional borrowings from other European languages plus an annual increment of scores of international scientific and technical terms that are not ordinarily the province of the layman in any language, and the result is that the percentage of foreign words in Hebrew today is probably several times higher than it was in Ben-Yehudah's day. In fact, it is by now possible to construct lengthy if improbable "Hebrew" sentences which sound and look like nothing so much as a kind of Semiticized Esperanto.

To the pragmatic-minded average citizen of Israel, for whom a spade by any other name is no less useful an implement, none of this is likely to seem cause for alarm. Many of his more intellectual countrymen would agree with him. Borrowing, they can point out, is after all a natural process by which all languages grow, particularly in times of heightened cultural cross-contact. In an age in which American civilization and technology have cast their shadow over the globe, in which the Japanese drink *koka-kora* and the *Académie Française* wrings its hands over the depredations of Franglais, why should the guardians of Hebrew think that they alone can stem the tide? Besides, Hebrew has already undergone intensive periods of borrowing in the past, as for example in Hellenistic times, when it absorbed hundreds of Greek words that today form an indispensable part of its vocabulary. Surely the purist does not propose to strike these from the language too! But such, alas, is the illogic of purisms everywhere, which are constantly defending standards of correctness against whose acceptance they would have fought just as hard in the past.

The "purist," however, can object with some justice to being cast in so obscurantist a light. The real issue, it is arguable, is not borrowing as such, whose positive aspects no one would care to deny, but rather the indiscriminate resort to it that fails to take into account the specific needs

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and nature of the borrowing language. Precisely this in fact is what distinguishes the borrowed Hellenistic vocabulary that one finds in the Mishnah and Midrash from that of today: for whereas the former passed into Hebrew slowly over a period of hundreds of years through a natural process, filling a definite need and emerging for the most part outwardly indistinguishable from the rest of the Hebrew lexicon and no less functional, the abrupt and unregulated absorption of today's loan-words has more often than not led to the opposite result. The curious case-history of a word that has been twice "lent" to Hebrew illustrates the difference. When the Greek *spongos*, "sponge," was adopted by Mishnaic Hebrew (the Jews of biblical times, not a sea-dwelling people, apparently never possessed such a term), it was first metamorphosed into the phonetically-Hebraic *s'fog*, which in time productively yielded the verb *safag*, "to absorb," the adjective *s'fogi*, "sponge-like, absorbent," and the noun *maspeg*, "a blotter," all in accordance with the regular laws of Hebrew grammar and morphology. When the same root, on the other hand, redundantly re-entered Hebrew via English in the present century to signify the common household sponge—the sea-animal continues to be called *s'fog*—it did so rudely untransmuted as *sponja*, a phonetic barbarism (the soft "j"-sound is not even represented in the traditional Hebrew alphabet), so unmanipulable that one has to do violence to the idiomatic integrity of the language simply to use it in a sentence. (That is, because *sponja* yields no verb or any other derivable form, one cannot "sponge the floor" as one would ordinarily; one must "make a *sponja*.") Since this lack of a selective mechanism to reject or adapt what is not conveniently assimilable in itself has characterized the borrowing process in modern Hebrew as a whole, perhaps because its speakers have not yet had the time to develop the necessary linguistic "antibodies," it is clearly senseless to regard each borrowed word as though it were an automatic blessing. True, Anglicisms like *le weekend* and *le snack-bar* can hardly be considered enhancements in French either, but any comparison between the two languages is simply misleading. The one would be a normal, healthy organism even if it were not the bearer of a great modern culture in addition; the other is a historical aberration, a body risen from the dead, still more bone than flesh, spoken even today by barely two million people living in a provincial corner of Asia—and what is even more to the point, to judge by any meaningful standard, spoken well by few of them indeed.

For ultimately the character of a language is determined not by its atomistic words but by the way these are put together to form sentences and thoughts, and it is precisely at this level that colloquial Hebrew today confronts its greatest problems; indeed, it has been hyperbolically suggested by some observers that any resemblance between it and the classical language of the same name is purely coincidental. This is plainly an exaggeration, yet it would be difficult to deny that Hebrew has probably changed as much from the time of Ben-Yehudah to the present as in its entire previous recorded history of three thousand years—and not in vocabulary alone. One needn't look far for the reason. Hebrew is a member of the Semitic family, while the Palestinian settlers who revived it were nearly all native speakers of European languages of a vastly different order (by and large, the great waves of Arabic-speaking immigrants arrived in Israel too late to have had much effect on modern Hebrew in its most formative stage); and just as the individual in learning a second language retains an unconscious and often lifelong tendency to translate from his mother-tongue long after he has mastered the new vocabulary as such, so on a collective scale, in the very course of being brought back to life, Hebrew was overrun by countless foreign modes of expression that have drastically transformed its idiomatic, grammatic, and morphological structures—and with them, it can be argued, its unique quality as well. A few examples may help to bring home the point.

A GLANCE at the profound impact of Yiddish on the development of Israeli Hebrew is particularly revealing in this respect, all the more so because that impact has been for the most part surreptitious: practically nil on the level of individual loan-words (a reflection of the conscious rejection of Yiddish and Yiddish culture by the East-European *chalutzim*), enormous in the largely unconscious domain of idiom and syntax. Again a single case-history is paradigmatic. In the Bible, in Lamentations 5:17, there occurs the elegiacal verse, "For this our heart has become sick, our eyes have grown dim." In the original text the second half of this distich consists of but two words, the verb *chashchu* ("grew dark") followed by the noun-plus-possessive-suffix *eyneynu* ("our eyes")—a combination typical of classical Hebrew's vigorous preference for verbal statement, which is often made to do the work of the European adjective and adverb. At some point in Yiddish's relatively short lifespan, this idiom, like many others from the Hebrew sources, was freely translated and adopted, becoming in the first-person the common exclamation of shock, surprise, disbelief, etc., *es iz mir gevorn finster in di oygen*, "it went dark before my eyes." So far, so good; but when originally Yiddish-speaking settlers in Palestine felt the need for such a phrase in modern Hebrew, they did not return to the biblical text as might have seemed logical, but rather re-translated their Yiddish translation of it verbatim as *na'aseh li choshech ba'eynayim*—an expression of which, though the constituent parts may be pure He-

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brew, the sum is anything but. And yet today the Israeli who might exclaim *chashchu eynai!* in a moment of biblical pathos would strike those of his listeners who understood him at all as being rather oddly affected. Moreover, though the ironic feedback in this particular instance may be nearly unique, the rule it embodies—i.e., that wherever a Yiddish loan-idiom takes root in colloquial speech the corresponding indigenous Hebraism is sooner or later driven out—has all but the status of an ironclad law.

Or to take another example, this one grammatical. As any student who has ever gotten through a few chapters of a Hebrew grammar knows, Hebrew in common with other Semitic languages has no verb for "to have." The sense of possession can be conveyed in a variety of ways, the most common of which is the particle *yesh*, "there is, there are," followed by the dative form of the pronoun; thus, for example, "I have the letter" would be *yesh li* ("there is to me") *ha-michtav* ("the letter"). The same beginner also knows that Hebrew has another particle, *et*, whose sole function is to interpose between a transitive verb and its object as an indicator of the accusative case, e.g., *k'tov et ha-michtav*, "write the letter." How then does one say "I have the letter" in modern colloquial Hebrew? How else but *yesh li et ha-michtav*, treating *yesh li* on the European model as though it were a subject and verb! Logically this is a complete absurdity, having somewhat the same effect on the traditionalist ear as the double negative in English—the difference being, however, that in Israel today one is as likely to hear the *yesh-li-et* form from university students and poets as from truck drivers.

But the structural transformations that have taken place in spoken Hebrew go far beyond such individual cases to affect the basic typology of the language itself. Classical Hebrew belongs to the category of languages that linguists loosely refer to as "synthetic," meaning that it tends to fuse auxiliary parts of speech into single words, unlike most modern European tongues, which prefer to "analyze" such segments into discrete, individual units. Under European influence, however, this natural inclination toward compression, which seems so admirably suited to the terse simplicity that is one of the hallmarks of both biblical and Mishnaic prose, has all but disappeared from Hebrew conversation today. In the Hebrew of the Mishnah, for example, the sentence "I wrote it to my father" would be *k'tavtiv l'avi*, in which the first-person nominative pronoun, the past tense of the verb "to write," and the direct object "it" are all incorporated into the first word, and the preposition "to," the noun "father," and the first-person possessive suffix into the second. Present-day Israeli speakers, on the other hand, will generally say *ani* (I) *katavti* (wrote) *et* (accusative particle) *zeh* (it) *el* (to) *ha-abba* (the father) *sheli* (of mine), very much as one would in Yiddish, Russian, or English, thereby avoiding both the conciseness and the sometimes complicated phonetic shifts of the classical inflections. To be sure, even today, colloquial Hebrew remains a more synthetic form of speech than most European languages, nor can its loss of synthetic features be blamed entirely on them, inasmuch as incipient signs of such a process appear as far back as Mishnaic times. Yet one need only turn in comparison to Arabic, Hebrew's closest living relative, where one still says in the colloquial *katabt'hu l'aboi*, "I wrote it to my father," to see how far Hebrew has already gone toward becoming a Semitic language with a fundamentally European type of construction. So accelerated has this process of breakdown become, in fact, and so great are the current flux and confusion of usage that have resulted from it, that simply to write a conversational Hebrew grammar that will be both descriptively accurate and pedagogically acceptable is at the moment perhaps an impossible task.

THUS, SPOKEN Israeli Hebrew can now perhaps best be described as a substandard immigrant speech that developed in the absence of any native population to serve as a corrective guide (imagine, for instance, the evolution of the English of the Lower East Side had it suddenly been cut off about 1900 from all further contact with the rest of New York City)—or, rather, in which the role of "native population" has been played entirely by the written word, which alone has continued to provide an organic linguistic link with the past. Here, too, of course, there has been a considerable divergence of practice in modern Hebrew between serious poetry, prose, and belles-lettres, which have on the whole striven consciously to retain the classical forms, and popular literature and journalism, which have been far laxer about observing them, yet even the most mass-circulation Israeli tabloid is far more conservative in this respect than ordinary speech. (One reason for such "good usage" is that it literally pays: since classical syntax is characterized by its brevity, it makes for a valuable saving of newsprint.) The further removed the speaker is from the influence and example of written Hebrew, on the other hand, the more "first-generation" his speech tends to be, regardless of whether he himself is an immigrant to Israel or not. One must distinguish, moreover, between this kind of "street Hebrew" and the countless unlettered vernaculars spoken all over the world that have the homespun self-sufficiency of genuine folk-creations. When one listens to the speech of an ordinary workingman in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, one is struck above all by its poverty of expressive means; not that the individual in question cannot say perfectly well what he wants to, but rather that the form this takes has none of that rich coloration that can come only from a

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long symbiosis between a particular language and a specific way of life with its landscape, manners, rhythms, humor, beliefs. Even slang, that most ephemeral of linguistic phenomena, is in Hebrew today still largely an exercise, if often covert, in translation.

Time will of course do much to change all this: give Hebrew enough of it (even Ben-Yehudah's great-great-grandchildren, after all, are today only fifth-generation speakers of the language) and it will undoubtedly develop a "style" of its own as fraught with the spirit of place as local speech anywhere. What is not strictly speaking a function of time, however, is the form that this "style" will take and the relationship it will bear to the "style" of classical Hebrew. In other words, is the current Europeanization of Hebrew speech with its attendant consequences for traditional Hebrew grammar, morphology, and idiomatic structure a somehow reversible trend, or is it a one-way street that will eventually make the Hebrew of the Bible and later classical texts as remote and even unintelligible to the average Israeli as the English of *Piers Plowman* and *The Canterbury Tales* is to Americans today? Certainly most linguists would incline to the latter possibility as by far the more likely—a prognosis the implications of which, it need hardly be said, are by no means purely linguistic. Implicit in the Hebrew revival from the beginning was the assumption, which is still widely shared today not only by official Zionist ideologues but by most Israeli educators and intellectuals, that by virtue of the mere act of thinking and speaking in Hebrew the simplest and most secularized citizen of a Jewish state is brought into a relationship with Jewish history that few Jews elsewhere can hope to attain. In view of Hebrew's profound role in this history, the assertion seems almost self-evident; yet how long can the language continue to evolve in its present direction before it ceases to be so?

Like Molière's *bourgeois gentilhomme* who was astonished to learn that he had been speaking prose all his life, most Israelis are happily unconscious of the fact that they suffer from a "language problem": speculation on the intricate bonds among language, culture, and national identity, after all, is hardly a commonplace concern, while on the level of everyday communication Hebrew "as she is spoke" is a perfectly satisfactory medium. It is generally only upon intensive contact with a second language, often while studying abroad, that the native-born Israeli tends to become aware of some of the deficiencies of his own speech—and frequently he then reacts by blaming Hebrew itself rather than his own imperfect command of it. I myself have more than once had the experience of being assured by well-educated Israeli acquaintances that Hebrew had no word for some ordinary English term only to discover later that it in fact had several of which they were simply unaware. In a similar vein, in an essay published in these pages a few years ago,* Robert Alter related the story of a young Israeli academician, a native of Czechoslovakia, who was told by his Czech university friends when he returned to Prague on a visit that thinking in Hebrew had "made him stupid." At the very least, obviously, it failed to improve his Czech, yet Alter's accompanying conclusion that "Hebrew lacks some of the very linguistic tools that make precise analytic thinking possible" strikes me as being unjust. It would be truer, I think, to say that many of the tools that Hebrew does possess go unused and even unrecognized by its own speakers, who have not begun to exploit the wealth of possibilities that it offers them. And as a rule, the harder Hebrew is forced into the procrustean mold of one or another European language, the more stubbornly it balks at tasks it could otherwise perform without effort.

IF ANYONE in Israel today takes Hebrew's contemporary condition to heart it is the serious Hebrew writer, not only because he is committed to the language as an artist or because he is in a way its recognized social custodian, but also because he more than anyone is the victim of the gap between its written and spoken forms. In poetry, a medium which in all cultures permits and in some even demands a degree of archaic diction, this breach is felt less acutely, which is certainly one reason why the modern Hebrew poet has on the whole been able to sustain a higher level of accomplishment than the writer of prose fiction: here at least it has been possible to draw freely on Hebrew's many linguistic strata, classical as well as contemporary, without raising the problem of compatibility. The Hebrew novelist, on the other hand, particularly if he works in a naturalistic vein, has his loyalties painfully divided: either he writes in a more or less classical manner and in a sense is unfaithful to the verbal world of the characters he portrays, or else he veers toward the colloquial and in yet another sense betrays the language in which he is writing. Even if he wished to strike out on his own in the vernacular and break with the classical model entirely, a step for which there is certainly no lack of successful precedents in other languages and in other times, he would soon find in practice that spoken Hebrew at its present stage is simply incapable of bearing such a burden. Quite the opposite reaction to this dilemma is typified in its extreme form by the fiction of S. Y. Agnon, whose aristocratically pure prose has "dealt" with the problem of Israeli Hebrew by simply ignoring its existence, just as his stories themselves stand transcendentally aloof from the earthly Jerusalem in which they take place. Yet because of this, master of language though he is, Agnon has become a stylistic dead-end whose work a younger

* "Poetry in Israel," December 1965.

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writer can study and admire, no doubt, but from which there is little for him to learn.

For the Hebrew novelist who is determined nonetheless to establish himself on some sort of linguistic middle-ground there does of course exist a compromise solution, a division of labor, as it were, between dialogue, which can be effectively written with colloquial verisimilitude, and narrative, for which a classical prose with its far greater expressive power remains clearly more suitable. (English readers of Henry Roth's novel of Jewish immigrant life in New York, *Call It Sleep*, will recall a somewhat analogous strategy, one that worked with brilliant success.) In one form or another this convention has been adopted by most writers of Hebrew fiction today, yet paradoxical though it may seem, what one misses above all in the work of nearly all of them is a certain interest in experimenting with language as such, in stretching and expanding its plastic potential—an interest which is by contrast abundantly present in Hebrew authors of the pre-Palestinian period, men who were born and raised in Eastern Europe and who learned their Hebrew by rote on a *cheder* bench under the uninspiring eye, if not the stick, of the village *melamed*. The "paradox," however, is easily explainable. It was precisely the traditional education of figures like Mendele, Brenner, Gnessin, etc., with its onerous attention to memorization and detail, that instilled in these writers an intimacy with the text-world of classical Hebrew and its sister-language Aramaic, with the Bible, the Mishnah and Midrash, the limitless "sea of the Talmud," the later rabbinical commentaries, which enabled them to play on the language with virtuoso control once they embarked on their literary careers. Few Israeli authors today, on the other hand, have received a Jewish training that remotely approximates that of the *shtetl* in thoroughness and extent, with the consequence that they find themselves in a measure cut off from Hebrew's classical hinterland—a situation that is unfortunate only because the modern language, as we have seen, is still badly in need of nourishment from these very sources. Caught between a vernacular that he cannot fully lean upon and a classical corpus of which he is not wholly the master, the Hebrew author not surprisingly may succumb on occasion to a feeling of occupational malaise. Two or three years ago, for example, the talented and widely-read novelist Aharon Meged, himself a product of Palestinian youth movements and the Palmach, published a nostalgic article in the Hebrew press mourning the passing of that earthiest, that most delightful, that most inexhaustible of languages . . . Yiddish. How bare and insufficient, how lacking in nicety and nuance, Hebrew seemed in comparison! It takes some knowledge of the bitter struggle waged between Hebrew and Yiddish in Palestine up until the eve of the Second World War, of the polemics, the boycotts, and occasionally even the blows, to be able to appreciate the full poignancy of such remarks.

And yet the victor can afford to be generous, even sentimentally so; the mere suggestion that Hebrew might have been a mistake would seem utterly unthinkable to anyone in Israel today, except of course for the inevitable lunatic fringe (one spokesman for which, a diehard Yiddishist and self-proclaimed Ashkenazi-supremacist named Kalman Katzenelson, actually wrote a book on the subject several years ago—in Hebrew). For in the final analysis, history has miraculously confirmed Ben-Yehudah's prophecy that Hebrew, far from being one of Zionism's more quixotic fantasies (Herzl himself, it is well-known, was inclined to this opinion and foresaw German as the future language of his *Judenstaat*), was in fact its *sine qua non*, not just because it alone could unite the varied strands of the Jewish people reassembled in Palestine, but also because only it could underwrite their aspirations with the full authority of the Jewish past. Any alternative to Hebrew would have meant the loss of Zionism's historical content, the political consequences of which would have been to degrade the movement into the mere colonizing enterprise that its enemies always viewed it as being and so doom it in advance. If the visionaries of the Hebrew revival miscalculated at all, their miscalculation lay rather in the failure to consider that even miracles have their price and that a conquered language and a cultivated one are two different things. But if it was shortsighted of them to believe otherwise, it would be equally so today to assume that just because spoken Hebrew has taken a certain tack up until now it must necessarily continue to do so. Linguistic change is a constant whose precise nature and rate remain variable, and this is especially so in an age of mass media and mass education, in which for the first time in history the forces working to conserve and standardize language are as great if not greater than those tending to corrode and fragment it. Indeed, it is not out of the question that with the intelligent harnessing of these forces it may yet prove possible to salvage for a living Hebrew much of its classical heritage that already appears irretrievably lost. The prospect may seem unlikely, yet it is hardly as far-fetched as the notion one-hundred years ago that Hebrew would some day be spoken again at all.

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Coming of Age in Chicago

Joseph Epstein

I HAVE ALWAYS doubted that Chicago ever even faintly resembled the city of Carl Sandburg's poem, but I know for certain that by the time I was born there the city of the big shoulders had developed a serious slouch. The year was 1937, the event took place on the West Side. The neighborhood of my birth is the same one described in Meyer Levin's novel, *The Old Bunch*. The old bunch has long since departed, and Negroes live there now. Today the place is a jungle into which, even in a car, one enters with trepidation and from which one exits with relief. Apparently it was at best never much more than a good place to flee from. Flee my family did, as part of a general Jewish migration across Chicago to the far North Side and thence, later, into the northern suburbs. This particular migration was conducted in moderately high style, topping, surely, our family's previous migrations: my grandfather's from Russia to Montreal to avoid conscription into the Czar's army; my father's from Montreal to Chicago at the age of seventeen, because if you were a smart Jewish kid in Canada even mildly on the make, you sensed that the United States was where the action—which is to say, the money—was. On our way to Chicago's North Side, I recall living briefly in a reasonably fashionable apartment hotel, then in an apartment on Sheridan Road off Lake Michigan, and then finally settling into a neighborhood called West Rogers Park. At the time, the *West* in West Rogers Park was no mere geographical distinction, for it denoted a full notch up on the status gauge over plain Rogers Park. It was in West Rogers Park, in a predominantly Jewish, wholly middle-class atmosphere that I grew up—without want, without fear, without, as we used to say around the neighborhood, sweat.

My friends and I were the sons of survivors, successes, in a modest sense of the word, even winners. Our fathers owned small businesses, were doctors or dentists, or shrewd, knowing lawyers. My own father began as a salesman. Too old for World War II, he stayed in Chicago during the war and made a bundle. A realist, he will tell you even now that you had to be very bad not to do well during those years. On one occasion, in less than an hour's time, a single sale brought him a $10,000 commission. He did so well, in fact, that the people he worked for couldn't stand it and attempted to cut his commissions. So not long after the war he left the firm and went into business for himself. It was shortly after this that we moved to West Rogers Park. As a child I remember that whenever I asked about our financial situation I was told that we were not wealthy but "comfortably off."

This was typical. In all financial and social matters a conservative, my father played his cards not so much close to his chest as inside his shirt. During a stretch in the middle and late 50's, he began driving Cadillacs. He did so largely for business reasons. His customers were impressed with the outward signs of success, and if it helped business, he was ready to supply these signs. But he was always a bit uncomfortable about the ostentation of a Cadillac, and every night, returning from work, he would hide it in the garage. He had a partner in those years, a swinger who bought his clothes in New York—a dozen pair of shoes at a whack!—and who, in addition to driving a Cadillac himself, also kept a red Corvette convertible and wore a carefully manicured goatee. In later years, my father bought him out; and soon after, with obvious relief, he dropped the Cadillac and began driving an Oldsmobile.

We belonged to none of the town or country clubs open to Jews in Chicago, though the parents of a great many of my friends did. Insofar as I could see then, or can now, these clubs all operated on wholly plutocratic principles: if you had the cash, could pay your tab, were not too clearly involved with the Syndicate (though at some clubs this didn't hurt at all), and were a sufficient number of years removed from the West Side, membership was yours. The number-one subject in these clubs was money. Money, indeed, was the meaning of Chicago, what the city was all about. Unlike the East, Chicago's pretensions to an aristocracy or social elite were nonexistent. The city's long-established families, the Armours, the Swifts, the Wilsons, were, quite literally, butchers. Everywhere in the city money was the sole, the whole, measure of the man.

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Often I was taken by a friend as a guest to one or another of these clubs. The Town Club, which then occupied the top floors of the Sheraton Hotel, in whose card-rooms men played gin, Hollywood-Oklahoma, for a dollar a point, games in which, without any trouble at all, on a bad night one could drop five or ten grand. The Covenant Club, where the big attraction was the food and the *shvitz*. Green Acres, the country club in Northbrook, in whose locker-room I can still recall four men, bald and fat and hairy-backed, swathed in towels, smoking cigars, nibbling at immense slices of blood-red watermelon, and playing gin, while elsewhere in the room Filipinos in white shirts and black trousers with a gold stripe down the sides hustled about shining members' shoes, arranging lockers, and greeting members freshly emergent from the showers with great puffy blue towels. Two other clubs—the Standard Club downtown and the country club in Lincolnwood, known as Bryn Mawr—were both then said to be controlled by German Jews and I had no connections in either.

My father would not have allowed himself to be caught dead in such clubs. I never found them anything but fascinating. Later I came to find certain virtues in my father's conservative style, but in my teen-age years it was the wheelers, the hustlers, the smart-money types, who made the strongest impression on me. The father of a friend of mine, for example, who was supposed to have bet $100,000 on a mid-week baseball game. He had to have been a very high roller to get the bookies to take on that kind of action, but in any event one drizzly Tuesday afternoon (as I have always imagined it), feeling lucky, or impatient, or bored with small victories, he called his book, placed the bet—and lost. A complicating factor was that he didn't have the money to pay off. Normally, this would entitle a man to a bullet in the head, his dead body stuffed into the trunk of an old car which, about two weeks later, would be discovered in the parking lot of some quiet neighborhood Lutheran church. However, it was in the middle of World War II and, as the story goes, the word had gone out not to make any hits on men in uniform. So my friend's father did the only sensible thing to do under the circumstances: he joined the Navy. In Navy bell-bottoms he walked into the office of the men to whom he owed the hundred grand. With a confident smile, he is supposed to have said: "I just dropped by to see if my debt to you gentlemen can't be negotiated." Here was a man I admired.

Yet one could be a certified Chicago hustler on a much smaller scale. Big time or small, it seemed almost everyone I knew or heard about in Chicago in those days was on the make, in on the take, with the show, dedicated not to be done in, to be—to put it flat out—the screwer rather than the screwed. There were cab drivers half of whose income derived from taking passengers to hookers' apartments; lawyers who founded whole careers on whiplash and other fake injury cases; doctors and dentists for whom medicine was strictly a sideline and whose prime interest was real estate; bailiffs, driver's-license-, elevator-, restaurant-, building-, and health-inspectors who tripled and quadrupled their regular salary through handouts, bribes, and other assorted shmeers; cops who specialized in making out and signing phoney robbery insurance claims, fixed traffic tickets, collected personal and business debts in uniform, or, as happened in one noteworthy instance, actually burglarized homes.

To a certain extent this went on in other American cities. But in Chicago it went on to a very great extent, and in fact most of the people I knew took a fierce kind of pride in the city's corruption. It was the badge of our sophistication, and we wore it early. As soon as I acquired my driver's license—I was fifteen at the time—a friend taught me to insert a five-dollar bill between it and the wallet-window in which I kept it; this way when a cop stopped me for a traffic violation and asked to see my license, the bribe would be at the ready. Watching the smiling, red-faced Irish cop slip the bill out of my wallet after stopping me for running a red light was a distinct thrill. Smooth! Along with the fin, an air of perfect understanding passed between us. It was a rite of passage successfully brought off, a true Chicago Bar Mitzvah.

Not so much behind everything in Chicago but towering above it was the Syndicate. Or rather the idea of the Syndicate. Nobody really knew anything specific about it, yet nobody really doubted its existence. In Chicago the "Outfit" or the "Mob," as people who liked to be thought very hip sometimes called the Syndicate, seemed quite different from what it has since been revealed to be in such places as New Jersey. From a distance, at any rate, it seemed no cozy Cosa Nostra, no hierarchically-arranged network of small-business-minded hoods, but a crunching corporation—smoothly and efficiently run, if still a little rough round the edges. Nor was it so exclusively Italian as it appeared to be in the East. In Chicago, Jews were heavily involved, mostly in administrative jobs, such as bookies or lawyers or fight promoters. West Rogers Park had its own Benya Kriks, men with names like Acey Feinman, Potsey Pearlstein, Hawkface Bernie Greenburg. Rumors were nagging, unverifiable, and delicious. I went with a girl in my junior year in high school, for example, whose father never worked. From the beginning of spring to the end of fall, he golfed. Winters he played gin at the Town Club. His brother, it was firmly established, had been a Capone lieutenant in the 20's. It was said that, as a legacy from those days, he, the younger brother, still collected a dollar a month on every juke box in the city of Chicago.

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WHEN I look back on it now, it all seems a bit like bad Damon Runyan, but it was very rich stuff at the time. The entire set-up was one I felt wonderfully comfortable in. Its guiding philosophy was "let Paris be gay," and its rules were uncommonly simple: go easy; don't make waves; why fight City Hall when for less than you might think you may be able to buy it?—and at all times and in all ways take particular care to distinguish yourself from the Polacks, the marks, the rubes, and the general lot of losers. In Chicago there were finally only two classes: winners and losers.

Self-regard had a lot to do with determining which of the two classes one fell into. The Fat Man was a case in point, a loser by most standards but his own and therefore not a loser at all. "Kid," the Fat Man once said to me, "who's got it better than me? Not many guys, that's for sure. I like my job, I eat good, I see all the movies I want, and I get it on the average of three times a week—plus once at home." That may not have been a true champion talking, but the man has to be counted a contender.

Fred Moscowitz, the Fat Man, made collections for my friend Philley Goldman's father's finance company. I first met him when I was sixteen, and for years afterward I thought of him as the first adult to take us seriously, to treat us, at a time when such treatment was terribly important, as grown-ups.

In order to lend his father a hand and, while at it, to learn the business, Philley Goldman began working on Saturdays with the Fat Man sometime during our sophomore year in high school. Philley brought great stories back from these Saturday outings. The Fat Man was a riot of good humor, a mine of information, a superior guide through certain inner chambers of the city. He took Philley to special restaurants (cheap but good), placed small bets for him through his various bookies, accompanied him to inexpensive hookers, and put him on to others whom he himself had visited during the week and who had some specialty he thought Philley might get a kick out of. Sometimes Philley and I would follow up on these tips. (Once Philley telephoned the Fat Man to thank him for a number which proved very satisfactory. "Hi Fred," Philley said, "just calling to thank you for that Doris number. Terrific! Really great! Everything you said she was, and more." A gravelly voice at the other end responded: "This is Mrs. Moscowitz.")

Philley finally arranged for me to accompany him and the Fat Man on their rounds one Saturday. It was just after seven o'clock in the morning when the Fat Man drove up to Philley's house in the company car, a powder-blue, 1950 Plymouth station wagon. He was bald, ruddy, had a warm rasp to his voice (a milder version of the late Andy Devine's), stood about 5′ 10″ and weighed in at somewhere over 300 pounds. His skull apart, he seemed not to have a bone in his body. His specialized knowledge of the best cheap restaurants in Chicago had taken its toll, and one had only to see him eat once to realize that his tremendous heft was in no way connected with glandular trouble. In the driver's seat of the Plymouth he draped a bib-like rag—his *shmatte*, he called it—over the great hump of his stomach to prevent the rubbing of the steering wheel from wearing out his pants.

After Philley introduced us, I addressed him as Mr. Moscowitz, but he immediately told me to cut out that "Mr. Moscowitz crap" and call him Fred. So as not in any way to make me feel the outsider, he insisted we all three sit up front; and so we did, with Philley crammed in the middle and I wedged flush against the door. The Fat Man was the kind of driver who was so good you didn't particularly notice he was even at the wheel. When a car behind us honked and passed us on the left, however, he rolled down the window in time to yell at the passing driver, "Blow it out your duffelbag, farthead!" Heading toward the city's South Side for the first collections, the Fat Man provided a tour of Chicago's great whorehouses. On Lake Shore Drive he pointed out one in an expensive high-rise which, according to him, had been one of the city's glories in the 30's. "Three bucks a trick is all it was," he said, "and they served cocktails. Lovely girls, too. Break their little hearts if you didn't dance with them a time or two beforehand."

In the back of the Plymouth the Fat Man kept a few old sheets, a blanket, and some loose rope. These were there in case he had to repossess some item on which the payments were hopelessly behind. Mr. Goldman had gone into the finance business only a few years before, and most of his business still came from furniture stores in slum neighborhoods—"risky paper," it was called in the trade, but not at all unusual for a small company just starting out. Philley had told me earlier that a repossession was to be avoided at all costs, the reason being that the repossessed item usually turned out to be worthless. When a man saw that he couldn't keep up payments on his television set, or refrigerator, or bedroom suite, and was therefore going to lose it along with all the money he had thus far paid in on it, he almost invariably entered his own little criticism of the system by demolishing whatever it was that was about to be taken away. (The logic of this still seems to me impeccable.) So if you were in the finance business, you threatened, you cajoled, you negotiated, you allowed for every kind of slackness, you stood ready to be called Jew-bastard (whether, I suppose, you were in fact Jewish or not)—and despite all this, in many cases in the end someone like the Fat Man would have to drag the sheets, blanket, and rope out of the back of his car and haul a television console with a smashed picture window and cigarette burns all

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over the cabinet down three flights of stairs. Not a very clean business, but profits were high.

The plan for the day was to begin on the South Side, making the first collections in Negro neighborhoods, then working our way back north. For the most part, the collections were fairly routine. The buildings in which we made them were almost uniformly dilapidated, with only minor variations in decay. In one the mail boxes swung loose, sprung from their hinges. In a number of others not very witty graffiti—"Henrys Mother Sucks"—adorned the walls. Stairway carpets, where they existed, were threadbare. Hallways stank of urine, vomit, cooking odors. Behind doors dogs barked, men and women argued, babies cried. An occasional apartment still had a *mezuzah* nailed to its door-jamb, the remnant of previous occupants in these hand-me-down buildings.

The Fat Man knocked on the doors of his accounts with meaty authority. Our first call brought a young mulatto woman to the door in her nightgown, a child at her breast. A few calls later a large black man who looked to be in his mid-thirties shoved a five-dollar bill into the Fat Man's hand and, without a word or a look at any of our faces, slammed the door. Later in the morning an elderly woman who didn't have that week's payment came on overly friendly, asking, with what she must have thought was great con, if we'd care to come in for a bite of breakfast. Some of the Fat Man's accounts had their payments when they came to the door, some went back into their apartments to get the money, some didn't have their payments but assured the Fat Man they would get some money to him the following week, and some didn't have the payment and chose to make no excuses about it. The Fat Man, meanwhile, gave pretty much what he got: he returned friendliness with friendliness, con with con, surliness with surliness. After each call he made a check mark on a 5″x 7″pink card.

Since it took a lot out of the Fat Man to climb so many stairs, that morning Philley and I handled the accounts who lived in third-floor apartments, leaving the Fat Man to wait in the car. In one apartment five Negro men were sitting around watching a baseball game on a television set for which we had come to collect a payment. The account, a flat-featured, very black man in his forties named Leroy Green, had missed his last two payments and he now informed Philley that he didn't have a payment this week either. He said so without any apparent anger or anxiety; in fact, he never really took his eyes off the ball game. Nor did the other men in the room look away from the game.

"Hell, Mr. Green," Philley said, "that's OK. Frankly, just between the two of us, I personally don't give a damn if you ever pay another penny on that set. My problem, though, is that I've got that prick of a boss on my back. That's a mean son-of-a-bitch, man, you better believe it."

I thought of Mr. Goldman, a tall, slightly stooped man, very gentle in manner, who had a sly sense of humor and extremely kindly eyes.

"When I get back to the office today," Philley continued, "I know exactly what he's going to say. He's going to tell me, screw that Leroy Green. He misses one more payment, you pull the television set out of his apartment. Let him stare at the walls."

Green seemed unmoved, a little bored even. He wanted only to get back to his friends and the game. I vaguely wondered what restrained this roomful of black men from pitching the two of us out of the window. Green finally mumbled something about trying to have next week's payment; and as we were leaving, Philley, putting on the finishing touch, remarked on the high quality of the television set's reception, comparing it favorably with his own, a last indirect reminder of what a shame it would be to have it repossessed.

We had lunch that day at a restaurant on the West Side called Little Jack's. Chopped liver, chicken soup with kreplach, rolls and rye bread and pickles and sour tomatoes. Philley and I each ordered a corned-beef sandwich, but the Fat Man told the waitress to make it two sandwiches each and better add a side of fries. For himself, he ate everything we did, only more; instead of the corned beef he had an entire flounder served with a small mountain of mixed vegetables and flanked by two baked potatoes. The house specialty at Little Jack's was cheese cake. After we had crammed down a huge wedge, the Fat Man asked, "How's about a second hunk, boys?" He was clearly disappointed when Philley and I each said no, we couldn't handle another piece. "Never know when you'll be back this way again," he said. "Fact is, you owe it to yourself to have a second piece," and then to keep his own books clear he ordered another for himself, which he washed down with his third bottle of soda.

After lunch the Fat Man parked the Plymouth in front of a one-storey frame house on Carroll Avenue, the only residence on a block otherwise made up of small factories. He banged on the door, which at first opened only partially, held back by a chain lock. "Why, it's the fat boy himself," said a small yellowish woman in an apron, wrinkled and in her fifties, who stood in the doorway. "How you making it, tons of fun?"

"Just barely, Gert, just barely," the Fat Man said.

Philley and I followed him inside, past a small foyer into a cluttered room. The room had, among other things, a lunch counter and six rather beat-up high stools. Behind the counter was a double hot-plate and a shelf stocked with seven or eight cans of Campbell soups and a few packages of breakfast cereals. A menu listing

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three or four sandwiches along with a meat-loaf plate was scribbled on a cracked blackboard resting on the shelf. A man in a pair of Army surplus coveralls sat at the counter drinking a cup of coffee and watching cartoons on an old television set perched on a stand high in a corner behind the counter; he probably worked at one of the factories in the neighborhood.

"Can I fix you boys something to eat?" Gert asked.

"To tell the truth, Gert," the Fat Man said, "the boys here are a little more interested in what you got in the back."

The man at the counter was leaving, and Gert excused herself to take his money. After paying, he said: "Say, Gert, can you take care of this for me?" He slipped a traffic ticket out of his wallet.

"Sure can, honey. No big deal." Gert took the ticket, unfolded it, and put it in a cigar box with a number of others. "My man comes in to pick these up on Monday. Whatever it comes to, you pay me later." She followed the man to the door and locked it behind him.

"Now," she said, speaking to the Fat Man, "I believe you said something about these boys' interest in what's out back. How's about yourself today, fatso?"

"Shit, Gert," the Fat Man said, "you know I make it a rule never to pay for it." They both laughed.

In the next room two women in housedresses sat on a couch whose stuffing was coming out of the arms and back. One woman was short, on the chubby side, and light skinned. The other, who was filing her nails, was large and very dark. Neither was young or attractive. Philley left with the shorter woman, and I followed the other one into a small room off to the right. After we had settled on price and she had checked me for disease, she slipped off her housedress and eased herself onto the bed. I had just removed my windbreaker and kicked off my shoes when she said: "No need to take off that sweater or your socks, sugar." The whole business was over with very quickly.

PROSTITUTES WERE nothing new to us. My own first venture was at fifteen, which set no records for precocity. The woman's name was Leona. She was a truly striking mulatto, what the sporting crowd in those days called a high yellow, the ex-wife of a fighter who, for a few brief moments in his life, was light-heavyweight champ of the world and who, while still not yet forty, was stabbed to death in the Sutherland Lounge on Chicago's South Side. The walls of Leona's apartment were painted black and Chinese red; the ceiling of her bedroom was mirrored. Professionally she executed a stunt called "around the world," which, combined with her good looks, brought her in a brisk business. She drove around the South Side in a new maroon Lincoln convertible. In her bathroom a burnt spoon, a needle, and a syringe lay on a shelf above the toilet.

The lush air of corruption surrounding women like Leona was always at least as enticing as the sex, which in fact tended to be quick and, to put it mildly, perfunctory. ("Wham, bam, thank you ma'am"—an old Chicago whoremonger's expression.) In running off to hookers as early as we did we sought, certainly at least as much as any kind of sexual relief, emulation. Whom were we emulating? Not our fathers, not any one person, not even any particular group of people, but rather what we loosely though confidently took to be a Chicago style of manhood. To go to hookers, to have a bookie, to know someone with proven Syndicate connections—this was to partake of the finest Chicago had to offer.

There was also the sheer fun of it. Trips of fifty or sixty miles to the cathouses of Braidwood or Kankakee, Illinois, were for us great communal events, and we went off on them the way I suppose other high-school kids went off to a state high-school basketball tournament. Five or six of us would pile into one of our father's cars for the big drive out. On the way we would laugh, sing, tease any novice who might be along—"Whatever you do, Danny, don't let her get her legs outside of yours"—and on the way back lie a little about the action with the girls, who usually had names like Rusty, or Bobby, or Pam. The highlight of these trips came on the drive back. On a turn on the Outer Drive we passed a large neon sign—since taken down—which blinked, "Dad's Old-Fashioned Root Beer, Have You Had It Lately." A very big laugh line, this.

It was on one of these trips that I first got to know Jeremy Levy. He was a year and a half older than I, an excellent athlete with an enviable reputation as a gambler as well as a number of unusual sexual adventures to his credit. One of the stories about Jeremy was set in Miami Beach. While down there on vacation, this story went, an uncle and three of his uncle's friends offered Jeremy a hundred dollars apiece if he would throw himself in with two lesbians who were performing for private parties in a suite at the Saxony Hotel. Jeremy collected the money. When I got to know him better, I never asked him to authenticate the story. Yet I found no reason to doubt its truth.

Jeremy's father was a millionaire. He had made his money over a very few years in the home-improvements business—a hustler's operation, borax all the way. It was a business so lucrative that many of his salesmen were making (this was in the middle 50's) a thousand or twelve hundred dollars a week. Jeremy's father, a sport, would fly back and forth between two distant cities to attend all the games of the World Series. It was not at all unusual for him to bet ten grand on a welterweight fight in, say, Philadelphia, fly

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out to watch it, and return to Chicago that same night. He kept odd hours, and I never saw very much of him, but you didn't have to to know that he was a man with no small talk. He was lean and tall, bald, with a thin mustache, a hooked nose, and dark, cheerless eyes. Possibly putting a knife in someone's back could bring a change of expression to his face, but not much less.

Jeremy looked more like his mother. He was small (around 5'5"), almost dainty, fair, though with dark hair, and had clean straight features inclining slightly toward the delicate. Like his mother, he was good-looking in a soft, toned-down way. With his mother's manner and looks and his father's mind and heart, Jeremy was doubly dangerous. In the murky waters of Chicago corruption, he swam effortlessly. He was the only person I've ever seen who looked absolutely at home in a whorehouse. Through his father's connections, he had tickets to everything: Bear games, Cub games, Blackhawk games, all fights, musical comedies, a box at both tracks, memberships in both a town and a country club, free rein with charge accounts at stores and restaurants. His cash was unlimited. On one particular afternoon I saw him blow $400 at Arlington Race Track and then return that night to the trotters at Maywood and win $600. He had of course his own car—a green Chevy, the current year's model, one of the first of the hard-top convertibles. Yet with all that his parents gave him, it never occurred to me to think of Jeremy as in any way spoiled, or as the son of a rich man. The reason was that I was sure that even if his parents had nothing to give him, Jeremy would still have gotten whatever he wanted. He was too intelligent, too single-minded in his desires, to be denied. In this world he was a guest, a taker, a winner born and bred, with a quiet though abiding love of putting it to his fellow man.

JEREMY'S FRIENDSHIP with me, at least at its beginning, involved the purest calculation on his part. Not long before he had taken up with me, he began dating a girl in my year at school named Sharon Levenson. For somewhat cloudy reasons, Sharon was one of the most popular girls in the school. The reasons were cloudy because she was not particularly good-looking—she was, in fact, rather plain, too fair, without memorable features, or much of a body. Nor was she at all clever. But there was about her a certain vulnerability, a quality of fragility, that evidently made all males want to protect her. My own feeling toward her at any rate was protective, and I recall feeling not at all good about learning that she was going out with Jeremy Levy.

Yet it was in connection with Sharon that Jeremy enlisted my friendship. With all his other action, Jeremy had not expended much effort on girls, certainly not on girls of Sharon Levenson's kind, and now that he had started dating Sharon he was setting up a full-court press to win over her and her entire family. My place in this campaign was to be fixed up with Sharon's younger sister, Roberta, who, Jeremy told me, had a crush on me. Not only did he arrange a date between Roberta and me, but he saw to it that on this first date he and Sharon doubled with us. His style with Sharon that evening was husbandly, with her sister and me almost fatherly. We saw Sarah Vaughan on stage at the Chicago Theater and afterward ate at Miller's Steak House in West Rogers Park, where Jeremy signed for the bill. We dropped the girls off at about one o'clock, and then took off to a poker game already in progess on Lake Shore Drive.

A word here on our attitude toward girls. Girls for us were of two kinds, nice and not-nice, and in either instance certainly never of primary importance. The not-nice girls you tried to lay with as little fuss and as much promptitude as possible. The nice girls, as a local hustler once remarked to me, you had to be a genius to lay. Besides, our criterion for a nice girl was not merely that she be sexually almost unapproachable, but that, should she be approachable, she should be sexually awkward. I remember a friend of those years once describing in fairly intricate detail what seemed to him a scene of special horror. It went something like this: it is your wedding night, and you are about to consummate your marriage to a girl you had all along thought good and pure and sweet and innocent. You kiss, she says oh darling, then disappears under the sheets to perpetrate something Byzantine on you. There it was: one's wife ought in all decency to be neither good at nor remotely interested in sex. Sex and the kind of girls one thought of marrying were separate subjects. Grand little mobster that I was, I once joined three friends at the apartment of a hillbilly hooker on the Near North Side before taking a "nice" girl to a dance.

Jeremy thought along the same lines as the rest of us on this subject. It would be making him out a harder number than he was to say that he planned his relationship with Sharon to turn out as it did. At the outset, I think he cared a great deal about her, and cared even more about the idea of her being his girl. Perhaps his campaign to win her over succeeded beyond his own expectations, for before long he took me into his confidence by telling me that he and Sharon had begun to sleep together. I felt no envy, no jealousy at this piece of news, but I would be lying if I said it didn't somehow pain me. And apparently Jeremy himself felt at first somewhat queasy about the whole business. He told me later that he went to his uncle, his father's younger brother, to ask his advice about it. The advice he got was that if he didn't screw this broad someone else would. The queasiness disappeared.

In its place appeared a firm determination to

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get the most out of what he had. Jeremy now played at being the husband with even greater intensity. He was always leaving Sharon his car. During the week he would take her out to the track, to the fights, to ballgames. Weekends there were musicals, nightclubs, movies. Sundays, while his parents were at their country club, he and Sharon spent all day at his house. A very different tone entered his accounts of their sexual adventures. Where earlier he seemed to be telling me what they had done together in order to signify her love for him, now his stories were told with a fiercely cynical pride, such as one of his father's salesmen might adopt to tell how he had sold screens and awnings to a family of Eskimos. I suspect I must not have been sufficiently enthusiastic about these tales of conquest, because now Jeremy began telling them to me with a certain persistence, filling me in on more details than I cared to hear. The more he told me the more Sharon was irrevocably, irretrievably, soiled. Jeremy now regarded her with the easy contempt with which in Chicago any loser is regarded. Perhaps she had been a disappointment to him. Sweet, pure, innocent Sharon—she was Jeremy's final proof that all the world was, if not corrupt, corruptible.

NOT QUITE final, though, for Jeremy evidently felt this particular theorem still needed notarizing and, though I did not yet know it, I had been chosen to serve as notary public. We were watching a baseball game one Saturday afternoon on television in his parents' richly finished basement, when Jeremy suggested that I stay for dinner and after that watch Sharon and him make love. It would be very simple, as he saw it, practically no chance of being caught. I would wait in a closet behind the bar in the basement; he would bring Sharon down, ostensibly to watch television, though of course to do what they always wound up doing. Once they had gotten down to business, I could slip out of the closet to station myself behind the bar, from where, in a crouching position, I could watch the whole thing.

Jeremy began emptying out the closet to make room for me. I would of course have to be very quiet, he said, pitching out galoshes, raincoats, and odd sports equipment. He had clearly been planning this escapade for some time. I was not especially shocked or disgusted by what he proposed; the voyeur in me was even slightly attracted. But I decided finally to refuse to go along because I somehow sensed that my position in that closet would be much more compromising than Sharon's beneath Jeremy on the basement couch. When I told Jeremy I had other plans for the evening that I really couldn't get out of, he was very obviously hurt.

In the fall Jeremy went away to the University of Wisconsin. He called me when he came home for Thanksgiving holidays and I saw him once during Christmas vacation, but before the year was out we had lost touch. In later years I would sometimes see him at a basketball game at Chicago Stadium or at the Amphitheater, but we no longer had much to say to each other. Every so often a friend would report that he had seen him. His father had in the meantime become involved in a scandal that held the front pages of the Chicago papers for better than a week. He was called before a number of Senate subcommittees, and at one point was sought simultaneously by both the FBI and the Syndicate. The scandal had broken Mr. Levy, and the last I heard he had lost his business and was reduced to managing an apartment building on Sheridan Road. The official line on Jeremy was that he was selling insurance. Then one day in a middle-of-the-paper story in the Chicago *Sun-Times,* one of those stories to which in Chicago there is invariably no follow-up, I read about a raid on a North Side bookie joint whose weekly handle was estimated at seventy-five grand. The police and for good measure the FBI were looking for the three men who ran it, one of whom was identified in the story as Jeremy Levy. About six weeks later a friend of mine, out for the day with his daughter at Lincoln Park Zoo, bumped into Jeremy, who was there with his young son. He was looking very well, my friend said, and claimed to be finally gaining a foothold in the insurance business. I find I don't spend much time worrying about his getting on in the world.

Yet I shall always be grateful to Jeremy, as I shall be to growing up in Chicago, for teaching me many valuable things and, valuably, teaching them to me early on. Because of Chicago, that is, certain kinds of knowledge came early: that men are attracted to power in all its forms and much less respectful of its uses than of its attainment; that with only the slightest encouragement men are ready to give vent to extraordinary viciousness; that, finally, there is nothing very original about sin. These conclusions, so startling to others when they stumble upon them in their maturity, are the A-B-C's of growing up in Chicago. Indeed, if one is immersed deeply enough in the life of the city they are likely to seem the whole alphabet. But if, with a bit of luck, one is able to rise a few inches above Chicago without losing sight of its lessons, then what a different look the world takes on: how special goodness seems and how exhilarating to come upon a simple act of decency!

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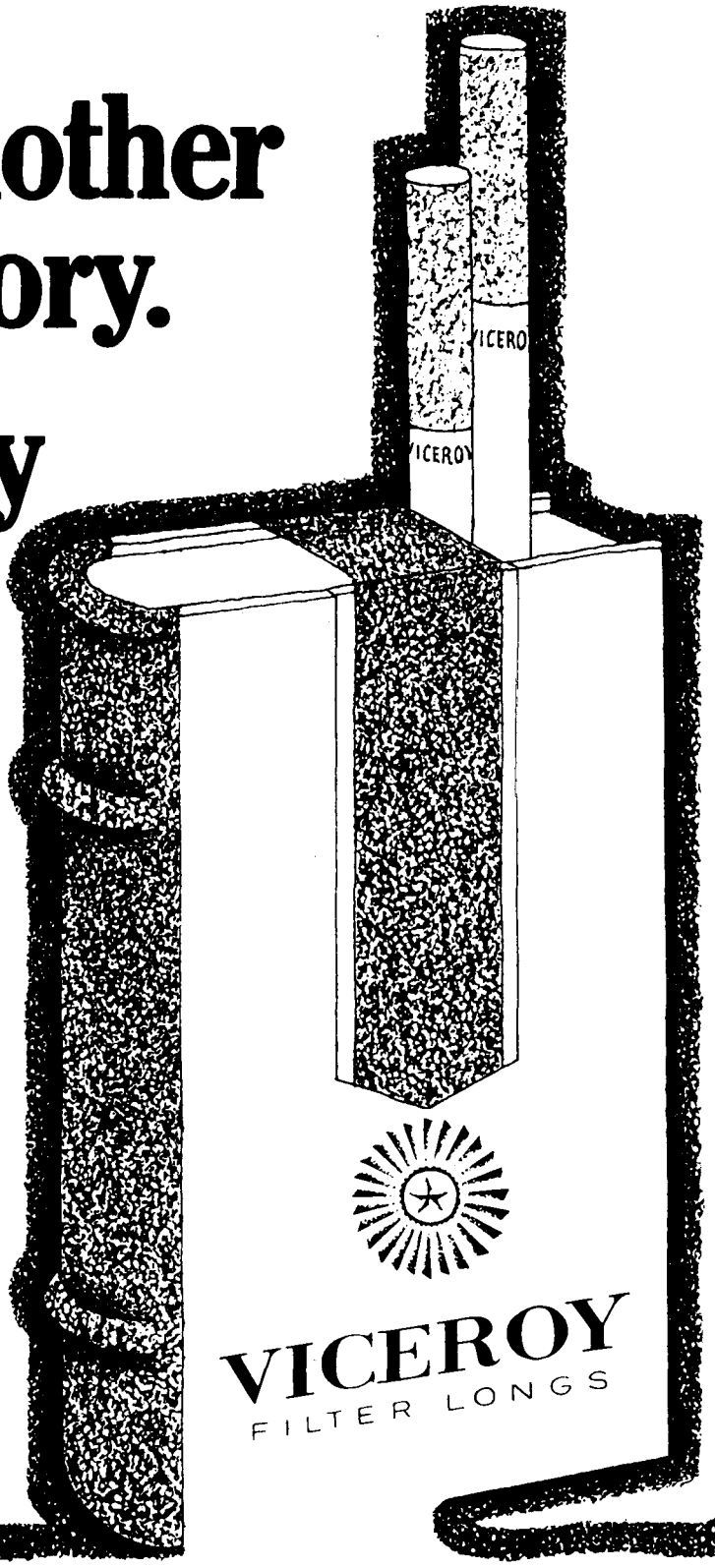

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A Real Russian Ikon

A Story

Paul Theroux

Fred Hagberg, forewarned by his travel agent in Cleveland of the Russian hunger for hard cash, had been in Moscow for two days and there had not been even a glimmer of interest in his dollars. The plastic cover of his American Express wallet stayed buttoned; Intourist paid all the bills. He expected to be guided to seedy black-market shops off the beaten track or, at the very least, pestered for cigarettes and Chiclets. There wasn't a peep from the Muscovites, and Fred thought maybe his travel agent meant somewhere else.

On the evening of the third day he was ambling along Karl Marx Prospekt, where it runs into Manège Square, returning from the Palace of Congresses where he had seen Verdi hysterically acted and shrieked to an audience of cows. The Mob of Shuffling Humanity, he called them, as they slushed along the sidewalk in felt boots, oblivious of everything, ignoring everything, tramping nowhere into the night. Fred hated their guts. He had just turned away from the revolting sight of two Russians eating (eating! on the sidewalk! at night!) when it happened.

There was a voice, the thickened tongue-lap of the impossible language, audible, but disembodied. Fred looked down. A small boy in a blue bolshevik beanie, hands crammed in the pockets of a cape-like coat, lurched alongside him. The boy was looking away, looking around in the direction of a slapping banner which, secured by cables, was being driven against the trolley wires by the wind and making sparks.

"Cherman?"

The boy turned from the slapping banner to the Obelisk to Revolutionary Thinkers, peered at the spikes, and spoke again.

"Enklis?"

"American," said Fred.

"Unidestates?"

Fred nodded and blew on his hands. He saw that the boy was still avoiding his gaze, looking distractedly elsewhere, slouching along the salt-gritty sidewalk, the perfection of KGB aplomb, furtive, but at the same time very cool.

The next exchange took Fred a while to understand, for each time the boy spoke he looked away. The boy apparently wanted chewing gum: Fred had none; the boy wanted a ballpoint pen (he called it a "pallboint"): Fred said yes. He fingered his Parker Jotter. The boy turned sharply right and headed toward a newspaper kiosk, closed up for the night. Fred followed.

In the glare of the sputtering arc-lamp high above Fred saw in the boy's palm a small enamel pin stamped with the gold head of Lenin and the dates 1917-1967. "Nice medal, good, best," said the little boy. "For the pen."

"Deal," said Fred offering it.

The boy took a deep breath, rolled his eyes up, prodded the Parker up his sleeve, and, turning away, deftly passed the little pin to Fred. The blue beanie disappeared in the darkness at the steps that lead to 25th Oktober Street, behind the Ploshchad Revolutsii Metro Entrance.

Back at the Metropole Hotel, in a room heated to a skin-crinkling eighty, Fred flicked on the fake chandelier and examined the pin. He knew, with that certainty that comes quickly to travelers, that he had been swindled. He ground it into the squares of shrunken parquet with his heel, and then spat.

Over a breakfast of syrupy coffee and flaking pastry Fred collected his thoughts. He had not, he decided, lost completely: a deal had been made. Only shrewdness had been missing, and that on his part. He had been too eager. Furthermore, he had been dealing with a kid. But several things stood out in the incident, and these were important: the Russians made deals, they talked to foreigners, and they were cagey. Pondering these Russian qualities Fred missed the English Speakers Tour of the City ("You will injoy," the brochure had enthused). There was only one thing left, something Fred had counted on seeing: the graveyard at the Novodevichy Convent, where Svetlana's mother was buried. She was the lady mentioned in the Twenty Letters to whom Stalin had called "Hey you!" and who, miffed, had gone upstairs and shot herself.

The taxi stand was at Sverdlovsky Square, near the Bolshoi Theater. A long line of people, laden with fishnet shopping bags (some showing with-

Paul Theroux's third novel, *Girls at Play*, has recently been published by Houghton Mifflin. Mr. Theroux is currently teaching English at the University of Singapore.

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ered fruit), stood morosely in mangy fur hats and ankle-length overcoats. Their noses glowed red, redder than the flags on the lightpoles or the banners on the Bolshoi which praised the Komsomol for fifty years of tireless devotion.

Fred fumbled for a cigarette with cold hands. He picked open the crushed pack of Luckies and withdrew a bent one. Smoothing it slowly, he felt subtle pressure on his sides, two warm bears, then a voice, a steamy word.

"Enklis?"

"United States," said Fred, squirming, feeling for his wallet of traveler's checks. He smelled pickpockets.

"Amerikansk?"

"Yeah," said Fred, looking up into a raw knobby face.

"Toureest?"

"Mm."

Without moving a muscle, Fred felt himself turning in the taxi-line, revolving on an axis like a slow-motion soldier. Again, without any effort on his part, he was borne by the pressure of the two bears to the near sidewalk where the giant seated figure of Ostrovsky in bronze brooded over a bird-limed manuscript.

Shortly, they were in a tearoom, the "Uyut" (Cozy) on Leninsky Prospekt, exchanging names. The bears were Igor and Nikolai and, by way of introduction, said they liked Willis Conover, someone Fred had never heard of, though Igor insisted he was a great American. Other names were dropped—Jim Reeves, the Beatles, Dave Brubeck, Jack London, President Kennedy—and then they got down to business.

"Dollars?"

"You mean, do I have dollars?"

"To have dollars," said Nikolai.

"Sure, I've got everything. I'm going around the world on the Pan Am flight. Pan American. You know what I mean?"

"American dollars. Very nice," said Igor. "You want rubles?"

"I want an ikon," said Fred. And added, "For my mother."

Neither Russian understood.

"Ikon, ikon, ikon."

Nikolai mumbled to Igor, whose face brightened. "You want *eekone*?"

Fred nodded. It seemed useless to speak.

"Eekone," said Nikolai. He giggled.

"We find eekone, you pay dollars us," said Igor. "To want rubles."

"It's got to be a good one. A *good one*."

"Don't whorry."

THEY WERE in a battered taxi, Fred in the back seat with Nikolai, the silent one. Igor, taller, more garrulous, sat in front with the driver, giving instructions. Down the wide avenues they sped, jockeying through the traffic, the little taxi slipping between a Zyl and a Zym, two tank-like cars like old Packards, complete with chrome jaws. They drew up to a shop which looked like a pawnbroker's, where Igor fought to the front of a mob of people around a counter and shouted the familiar word. A shopgirl folded her arms across her smock and shook her head.

At another similar place a shopgirl pointed to an inferior painting on the wall depicting a muscular bleeding Christ. Igor looked questioningly at Fred. Fred said, "*Nyet*."

The taxi-driver seemed to take an interest in the search. He muttered to Igor; Igor muttered back; Nikolai emitted a cluck, sucking at his front teeth, the sound that in most of Europe means yes. They were off again, and from the way the Russians settled back in their seats it looked as if it was going to be a long ride. They passed under the red banners which Fred drew their attention to. When they saw that Fred was interested they read each one—quite a feat, since there were three to a block and the taxi was going fast.

"Great Russian people," said Igor pointing. "Good Komsomol Fifty Year. . . . Hail Russian Worker." He interspersed the banners with sales-talk, as well: "Work Hard. . . . Dollars very nice. . . . Build State. . . . Cash or check? . . . Remember Comrade Lenin. . . . We find real Russian eekone. . . . Crush Imperalism. . . ."

They rode for several miles more, into a dingy suburb squeezed with old one-storey houses. The eaves of these houses were carved, but all were in disrepair. The taxi parked on the sidewalk. The driver got out, shouted something to Igor, and then disappeared through a gray wooden door. Fred made a move to get up, but Igor waved him back.

"Nice scarf," Igor finally said.

"This one?" Fred fingered his scarf.

"Sell?"

"I need it. It's cold here."

"Ten rubles, fifty kopeks."

"I want an ikon, an ikon! I *need* this scarf. It's cold—"

Igor stirred. The driver was giving a signal from the doorway of the ramshackle house. "We go," said Igor.

Fred was allowed to go in first. On entering, he did not notice the old lady, but when his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness he saw her, small, pale, standing fretfully among draped furniture, her white hair appearing in several tendrils from under her shawl. Her facial skin was loose and wrinkled, as if she had once been fat, the skin stretched and retaining its former size. Her eyebrows were heavy, her hands were large, she wore three sweaters and appeared much afraid.

Igor addressed the old lady. In the conversation that went on Fred heard the word "Amerikansk" again. The second time he heard it he smiled at the old lady, who looked incredulous

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for a moment, then stepped closer to Fred and smiled. It was an open, trusting smile which revealed her small fine teeth and creased her whole face like an old apple. She spoke to Fred in Russian.

"She asking you to want tea. She have her brother in America."

"Look, I didn't come here for tea," said Fred. The old lady implored him with an odd grace. "Okay, I'll have a cup of tea."

A smoking, steaming samovar was brought. It was brass and even in that dingy room stuffed with junk, gleamed like a church fixture. A small valve at the top popped open, shooting jets of steam into the chill air. The old lady placed a teapot under the spigot and twisted the key: hot water bubbled out. There were no wires.

Fred smacked his lips. "That's some contraption!"

"You like?" It was Igor, smiling like a cat and rubbing his hands.

"How much?"

The smile left Igor's face. He turned to the old lady who, when Igor spoke, shut the hot water off and looked quickly at Fred. She showed her large gnarled hands, shrugged, and said several words.

"No sell, she say."

"I'll give her fifty dollars." Fred began flashing fingers at the old lady, two hands at a time, ten, twenty, thirty. . . .

"*Karasho*," said Igor impatiently, "Okay, okay." He spoke again, his voice rising, his eyeballs rolling. The old lady muttered another reply and drew her shawl tighter.

"She want. For tea. No sell."

"Oh, for God's sake," said Fred. "Listen, for fifty bucks she can buy *two* of them, electric ones, any kind she wants. Doesn't she want a nice electric one?"

Nikolai said nothing. He simply snatched up a candle and wagged it in Fred's face, giving Fred a crazy grin that said, "No electricity—isn't it awful?"

"Okay, forget it."

But he wanted his trophy. The faint stamp in his passport СССР, МОСКВА and a date was not enough. Something substantial was needed, like the *Bierstein*, the rosary, the blue Wedgwood pot. And even if he could not be the traveler who brought home a demure full-breasted peasant girl, he would have his modest souvenir. If not, what was the sense in coming so far? And to Russia no less.

In silence, the tea was drunk. Fred finished his first. He placed his chipped cup on the floor and said, "What about the ikon? I haven't got all day."

"Eekone, yes."

The three Russian men gathered around the old lady. Igor did all the talking, pointing to Fred and, once, asking the taxi-driver's opinion. While he spoke Fred had a vivid moment in his mind, a very familiar one: he was back in Cleveland with his pals and they were making a deal. The faces were eager, joshing American ones, reddish, large-nosed, rough. The Russians even had crewcuts, the same thick ears and deep wrinkles. They were grinning and pushy-looking in a Midwestern way. They even seemed to be yakking in English!

The sight of the worn carpet, the sheets across the furniture, the coldness of the room brought Fred back to reality. He was half-way around the world from Cleveland, in enemy territory. He reminded himself to be careful.

The discussion was still going on, the old lady appearing not to understand. She asked many questions and got many shrugs, many gestures, many little sharp cries of admonishment as replies. Then the old lady rose very reluctantly, with sighs, and beckoned Fred into a little room at the side. The room was damp and even darker than the outer parlor. It was hung with heavy tapestries which, when the old lady lit a candle, appeared to be delicately embroidered. The room had the eerie glow of a chapel; in fact, the candle was a red glass chimney on a gold wrought stand. It was a vigil light and could have come from a very large church.

Warming the wax, the candle flared up. Above it gleamed the ikon, a painting the size of an airline calendar, Mary and child with tiny carefully-made faces and thin hands. Each head wore a coronet of little sparkling gems; in places there were pocks where gems had been. And Fred noticed that the paint had cracked, the boards had warped, the cloth around the frame had frayed. Still, it was beautiful. The candle flame grew higher, picking out tiny cherubs with trumpets, lilies, roses and fishes, scrolls, and, at the top of the ikon, a wordy motto in elongated characters like gold washing hung on a line.

"Boy," said Fred.

"You like?" asked Igor. To Nikolai he said, "He like."

Nikolai grunted.

"Is good," said Igor turning to Fred. "Is nice Russian eekone."

"How much?" asked Fred.

"Is good eekone," Igor replied. "Not much. Three hundred."

"Rubles?"

"Dollars."

"Two-fifty," said Fred.

"Okay. Two-fifty."

Fred cursed himself for not saying two hundred. "Travelers checks?"

"Is better dollars cash."

"I don't carry that kind of money around in cash," said Fred obstinately. "So it's travelers checks or nothing. You understand? *Travelers checks*!"

Igor winced. Fred realized he had shouted in

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the little chapel; he apologized. The apology seemed to bewilder them more than the offense.

"Ask her if it's okay."

Igor sidled up to the old lady and spoke, flicking his finger at the ikon. At Igor's word the old lady drew away, her back to the little altar, as if protecting it. She clapped her hands to her mouth, stifling a shriek; then, petrified, she wagged her head rigidly from side to side.

"No sell," said Igor, inexplicably grinning.

"No sell," mumbled Fred. "Did you tell her the price?"

"Now I tell." Igor shot fingers into the old lady's face and, at the same time, brayed numbers.

The old lady lowered her eyes and shook her head in a gentle negative.

Fred understood. "Not enough, eh? Fine, how much does she want for it?"

The old lady glanced up at Fred and spoke quickly. Her head dropped once more.

Grinning in the manner of Igor, Nikolai blessed himself with the sign of the cross, finishing by kissing his bitten fingertips.

"She wants. For pray," said Igor.

"What?"

Igor blessed himself as Nikolai had done, but Igor did it with his left hand and cast his eyes up to the ikon. Fred looked at the taxi-driver. He smiled sheepishly and did the same.

"What are you *kidding* me? Listen, you people don't pray—it's against the law, for God's sake. Listen. . . ." Fred knew he was talking too fast for the Russians. He tried in broken English: "Communist no like church. Huh? Church very bad. Praying bad. Priests bad. No pray in Soviet Union. Huh?" His patience was exhausted. He went on angrily, "So what the hell is this old lady talking about, will you just tell me that?"

Igor got the point. He leered. "Komsomol no like this." He clapped his hands prayerfully under his chin and attempted an appearance of devotion.

"Right. Tell *her* that," Fred said coldly.

Igor began to speak, but was interrupted by Fred again. "And tell her," Fred went on, "that she'll get into trouble if she keeps on praying, because it's against the law. And you know what *that* means! Siberia, right? Right. Go ahead, tell her."

"Is good idea," said Igor. He tapped the side of his head and puckered his mouth appreciatively, as if to say, "Good thinking." And then he spoke to the old lady. He had not said ten words when the old lady looked fearfully at Fred and sucked in her breath. She seemed trapped, as if the floor of the fragile chapel was about to give way and drop her onto a rockpile. She started to protest, but broke off in the middle of a word and wept. She averted her eyes from the four men in the room; she stared at the frayed carpet and, taking the knotted end of her shawl into her mouth, bit it, the way a person being tortured tries to endure pain. She moaned.

"Tell her to cut that out!" said Fred. She seemed to be doing it on account of him, pretending it was all his fault. He began to hate the old lady for making him feel that way. "All right," Fred finally said, "no deal. The deal's off. I don't want it! Will you tell her to cut it out!"

Fred was now shouting louder than the old lady was crying. It had a chastening effect on her; her sobbing died to a sniffle.

Igor spoke and as he did the old lady continued to sniff. "She wants sell eekone very much." He winked. "Two hundred fifty dollars, American."

"But I thought you said—"

"Wants sell to you," Igor said. He stood near Nikolai and the taxi-driver. Their faces were triumphantly rosy.

"Doesn't she want it for praying?"

Igor translated with evident malice.

The old lady looked at Fred with red eyes full of pleading fear, more fear than she had shown toward the three Russians. Her voice was small, her face puffy with grief, her unusually large arthritic-knuckled hands clenched tightly over her knees.

"She no pray. She say to me *no pray, comrade*!"

In the men's toilet of the "Uyut" tearoom Fred coated his hands with slimy soap and scalded them in the sink while a customer kecked anxiously into the commode. At last the customer left. Fred and Igor made the final transaction. Fred passed the travelers checks wadded in brutally heavy toilet paper to Igor who reached under the gap in the wall of an adjoining booth.

Outside, at their table, the deal complete, they touched teacups.

"Chin-chin," said Igor.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute," said Fred, feeling oddly abandoned and fearful. "What am I going to tell them at the customs desks at the airport? They're going to ask me where I got this thing." The bundle lay beside Fred's chair, innocuous-looking in *Pravda* and old twine. Fred pointed cautiously, then cupped his hands to his mouth and whispered, "I'll get into trouble. They'll know I changed my money illegally." Fred looked to Igor for reassurance. "I don't want any trouble."

"No trouble," said Igor.

"*What do you mean*—"

Igor hushed him; people at other tables had turned to watch the man shouting in English.

"What," said Fred with pained hoarseness, "do you mean, no trouble? They're looking for people who've changed their money on the black market. I'm an American, for God's sake, *an American*! They'll lock me up. I know they will." Fred was inconsolable. He sighed. "I *knew* this whole thing was a mistake."

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Igor chuckled. "No trouble. Tell police this eekone present."

"Sure, a present. You're a great help."

"Present, yes," Igor said calmly. "Find young policeman. Young man. Tell him, heh, you fack Russian gorl. She say, heh, yes, very good, thank you. Gorl give you eekone as present for fack. Easy."

"Oh my God."

"Don't whorry," Igor winked. "We go." He took Nikolai by the arm and departed, leaving Fred to pay the bill.

FRED WAS upset. Walking back to the Metropole he decided to throw the ikon away and forget the whole business. The decision calmed him, but he grew tense when he realized there was nowhere to throw the ikon. The alleys were bare; there was not a scrap of rubbish or even a trash-can on any of the streets. The gutters were being scrubbed by old women in shawls with big brushes. The bundle would be noticed as a novelty (no one threw anything away in Moscow) and would attract attention.

It was all the more worrying for Fred when the elevator operator, a sullen wet-lipped man in a faded braided uniform, gave the bundle cradled in Fred's arm a very queer look. Fred shoved it under his bed, downed three neat vodkas, and went to the Bolshoi to see *The Tsar's Bride*. He had been cheated on the tickets: he sat behind a post in the sixty kopek heights, in the darkness, shredding his program with anxious hands.

That night he could not sleep. The haggard face of the old lady appeared in his room. She accused him of stealing her valuable ikon. A Russian policeman with a face like raw mutton tore Fred's passport in half and twisted his arm. Igor, in a chair under a bright light, confessed everything. Nikolai wept piteously and pointed an accusing finger at Fred. Toward dawn Fred lapsed into feverish sleep. He awoke with a vow on his lips.

It was not easy for him to find the old lady's house. The banners were some help in figuring the general direction, but it was not until a day and a half after the visit with Igor and Nikolai—one day before he was due to leave for Tokyo—that he found the right street.

He rapped hard at the gray door, so hard he skinned some leather from his glove knuckles. He soon saw why there was no answer: a heavy padlock clinked in a hasp at the bottom of the door. Turning, Fred was brought up short by a figure on the sidewalk, standing with his hands in his pockets, eying him closely.

"Do you speak English?"

"If you zpeak zlowly."

"Where is the old lady?"

"Not here," said the man. At that moment a chauffered Zyl drew up to the curb. "You are friend?"

"In a way. See, a couple of days ago—"

"Come," said the man darkly.

They drove through narrow streets, then out to the wide Tchaklov Street that rings Moscow, and across the canal to more narrow gray streets, in the bare district of black stumps and boarded-up houses near the Church of the Assumption in Gonchary. They passed the church and continued for about half a mile over frost heaves in the empty street.

"Where are we?"

"Gvozdev," said the man, and he gave the driver a direction.

The car pulled in through a low gate cut in a thick stone wall. At the far end of a scrubby courtyard was a sooty brick building, the shape of Monticello on the back of the nickel, a domed roof but with one difference; this one had a chimney at the rear belching greasy smoke. It was too squat, too plain, too gloomy for a church. Fred pulled the ikon out of the car and followed the man into the building.

The front entrance—there were no doors—opened on to a vast high-ceilinged room, empty of furniture. The walls were covered with small brown photographs of men and women, framed in silver and set into the cement, not hung. The cold wind whistling through the front entrance blew soot and grit into the faces of people milling about in the center of the room. It was a silent group, apparently workers; Fred saw that their eyes were fixed on three men who sat on a raised platform at the far end.

The three men were dressed in long coats and boots. They all wore gloves. This would not have seemed so strange except that two of the men were holding violins; the third was seated at an organ. They began to play, still gloved, a mournful and aching song.

From a side door two men entered, carrying a coffin which they set in front of the musicians' platform. One of the pallbearers placed a small sprig of flowers on the coffin and touched the wood with his fingers.

"Old lady," said the man next to Fred. "She die I am not zurprised. It is formidable how she live zo long in this cold."

The scraping of the violins and the heavy breathing of the organ continued as the coffin descended into the floor, accompanied by the steely clanking of a hidden chain. The coffin bumped down and out of sight. Two trapdoors shot up, met, and shut with a bang which echoed in the stone room. When the echoes died out the musicians stopped playing and at once began tuning their instruments.

"Say," Fred turned to the man. He cleared his throat. "Can you direct me to the Novodevichy Convent?" He said nothing about Svetlana. There might have been trouble. On the other hand he felt sure he would get the ikon past the customs now.

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From the Ruins of Empire

George Lichtheim

LONDON, OCTOBER.—Among the penalties of having pitched one's tent within the ruins of a collapsing empire, the agonizing spectacle of injured pride masquerading as stoicism must surely rank foremost for any naturalized inhabitant of the British Isles these days. Whether it be the bewilderment of British troops in Belfast and Derry hemmed in by rancorous Irish factions, or the sight of a Labour government helplessly contemplating the formal secession of Rhodesia's white-settler population, the nostalgic imperialist in 1969 does not have a great deal to sustain his flagging spirits. If anything gives him comfort, it is the thought of Mr. Nixon unable to concede defeat in Vietnam because it might cost him votes in 1972. But that is poor consolation. The British, having gone through a minor ordeal of this kind at the time of the Boer War (1899-1902), know all about the soul-searching imposed by a squalid colonial war. But they also know that their current troubles are of a different order. America can endure dishonor and defeat in Vietnam, if it must, because in the final analysis Vietnam is merely a discreditable episode. For Britain, the road came to an end years ago, and what is occurring now is a long and solemn *post mortem*, with the entire nation assembled in the public gallery as more or less silent and orderly spectators.

There comes to hand, to assist me in my labors of composition, an intriguing piece of information from a book review by Mr. John Terraine in the London *Spectator* of October 11. Referring to a recently published official work on the Japanese surrender in 1945 (by Major General S. Woodburn Kirby and others), the reviewer notes, in the nonchalant manner typical of a now almost vanished breed, that the British briefly managed to win control of Vietnam before the Americans ever dreamed of getting bogged down there:

> It is by no means common knowledge that the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, found himself in control, in August 1945, of an area of one million square miles, containing 128 million people in varying stages of poverty, starvation and chaos—and that this area included not only the British territories of Burma, Malaya and Singapore, but also the independent kingdom of Siam, the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and that part of French Indochina which lay south of the 16th parallel (Vietnam).

The independent kingdom of Siam is also known as Thailand, and there are rumors to the effect that its independence is not quite what it seems. The British Commander-in-Chief in 1945 was Admiral Mountbatten, subsequently—in 1947—made Viceroy of India, for the purpose of enabling the British to get out of that sub-continent, after partitioning it, so that the Moslems might have a state of their own. I quote further from Mr. Terraine:

> In a previous volume of the Official History (*British Military Administration in the Far East* by F.S.V. Donnison) it has been stated: "Upon Admiral Mountbatten fell the perplexing task of conducting the early fateful contacts of the West with the upsurge of nationalism in South-East Asia which had been released, first, by the collapse of the European powers before the Japanese, and then by the defeat of the latter at the hands of the Allied Forces."

The British have always been good at this kind of reticent understatement, but modesty can be carried too far. The "early fateful contacts of the West" with nationalism in Southeast Asia go back a bit further than that. They reach back to the colonization of Indonesia by the Dutch in the 17th century, the establishment of British control over India in the 18th, and the 19th-century French attempt to carve out a rival empire in Laos, Cambodia, Annam, and Tongking. The more recent American presence in the area falls into clearer perspective when it is related to these earlier enterprises. Yet there are important differences too. During those happily distant days "trade followed the flag," for the simple but sufficient reason that the flag had been planted there for trading purposes in the first place. No one is ever going to claim that the United States got involved in Vietnam because it wanted the area's markets. The motivation was plainly political and strategic. Yet similar assertions have long been made about the later stages of British rule in India. It is now indeed pretty generally accepted that while the British went there originally for trading purposes and to outwit French and

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Dutch competition, what kept them in India long after they should have packed up for their own good was fear of Russia (Czarist Russia, that is) gobbling up the place. The fear may have been unfounded, but it was certainly real so far as the motivations of British statesmen went. By the same token it is arguable that what keeps the Americans in Vietnam is fear of China. If this is the case, it simply confirms what historians have long been saying: what counts in international affairs is the balance of power rather than simple profit-or-loss calculation. This does not alter the fact that imperialism also has an economic function. It just helps to place short-range goals within a framework that renders their seeming absurdity more comprehensible.

AT THE higher level of statesmanship, short-run and long-run considerations come together, which is just what distinguishes political strategy from ordinary tactical maneuvering. This is where "ideology" comes in: not as a mistress (perish the thought) but as a handmaiden. Of course we are all pragmatists now, especially those of us who have never encountered any other philosophy. But this does not alter the fact that even the most pragmatic statesman must have some general notion as to what he is trying to accomplish. The late John Kennedy, that prince of pragmatists, originally went into Vietnam (so it is said) in order to teach "the other side" that guerrilla warfare does not pay off. He may or may not have miscalulated the local balance of forces—there are conflicting views on this topic, notably among his erstwhile advisers—but the purpose of the exercise was clearly politico-military, that is to say strategic. It was an attempt to validate a set of principles which had been outlined, with a great flourish, by Professor W. W. Rostow in his profoundly unoriginal and uninteresting essay *The Stages of Economic Growth*, subtitled "A Non-Communist Manifesto."

It was the subtitle that made Professor Rostow a hero to his fellow liberals: chief among them the past, present, and future editors of the *Economist*, that distinguished periodical which is now almost alone in still championing the pure gospel of liberal imperialism, vintage brand (circa 1897). What the 1960 edition of the gospel told its readers was that economic "take-off" in backward countries could be artificially stimulated by a judicious injection of foreign (mainly American) capital and technology, plus local nationalism, which was there anyhow and only in need of a bit of encouragement. This was the rationale of the Alliance for Progress, a public-relations exercise whose ludicrous failure has by now become so patent that its propagandists have fallen silent about it. But it was also the rationale of American involvement in Vietnam, just as it underpinned the CIA's prolonged and tender interest in that great "socialist" Colonel Nasser, whose warlike ambitions were tactfully overlooked by his American advisers and paymasters in the interest of global strategy (the fact that he ratted on them, just as he is now trying to rat on his Russian backers, is irrelevant in this context).

In all three cases the underlying assumptions had been spelled out by Rostow & Co. before they were put into practice by the Kennedy brothers and their courtiers. And even now, when doubt has crept in among the Washington policy-makers, the really consistent ideologists have not given up hope that their aims can be validated in the long run. Thus the *Economist* (October 11, 1969):

> The most telling argument used by those who oppose the war—if one leaves out the people who would actually welcome a Communist government in Saigon—is that this is just a sweaty tussle between two more or less equally unsatisfactory lots of Vietnamese politicians, and that the difference between them is not worth the bloodshed it has led to. Even if one accepted this argument, it would need to be said that by the test of the amount of personal liberty it allows, and probably by the test of economic efficiency too, the regime in Saigon is one or two notches less unsatisfactory than the one in Hanoi. But the point is that this is not what the war has been fought for. This is not merely a quarrel about which of two presidents, or which of two cabinets, will be running South Vietnam five or ten years from now. It is a contest between two wholly different systems of government. The outcome will decide South Vietnam's prospects of developing something like a democratic system of politics, and something like a freely expanding economy, over the next half-century and more; and not only the prospects of South Vietnam, but also those of a lot of the other countries of south-east Asia behind it.

There you have it, black on white. And just so that the point shall not be missed, the argument is elevated to a higher moral level:

> Between the two systems that are contending for the future of south-east Asia, the marxist one and the pluralist one, there is on present evidence little doubt which has more to offer.

Were this a seminar in political science, the author of the remark just cited would have his essay marked "C minus" and be required to read a few basic Leninist and Maoist texts before venturing to describe as "marxist" what is plainly old-fashioned populism dressed up in socialist clothing.* But there is no sense in getting angry with a harried editorialist who is only repeating what he learned from the pioneers of the New

*Cf. *Marxism and Asia* by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart R. Schram (London: Allan Lane, 1969)—a scholarly and reliable selection of texts on the subject, with a very useful joint introduction by the two learned editors.

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Frontier eight or ten years ago. Besides, for every piece of liberal nonsense about "Marxist" political systems (why not "Thomist" or "Calvinist" ones too, so long as we are going to misuse Max Weber's sociological categories?) there is a populist or Maoist equivalent. There are some distinguished American critics of the Vietnam war—for the sake of their achievements in other fields they shall be nameless—who share Rostow's preposterous ideas about the nature of the cold war, except that their own political preferences differ from his. The common factor in either case is the belief that the outcome of the Vietnamese struggle will determine the fate of Southeast Asia, and that two radically different "systems" are at grips in the fields and jungles of that tortured country.

It is odd and perhaps significant that no one in France, from de Gaulle to the Communists, seems to share these notions, but then the French have some painfully acquired knowledge of the area. There was a time, around 1946, when they thought they could ride back to power by using the Catholics and the Buddhists to pull their chariot, but ever since the costly failure of that enterprise they have taken a suitably detached view of the region and its problems. So far as they are concerned, it matters not a whit whether Hanoi gets control of the entire country, for as they see it the real issue in Southeast Asia will always be the desire to avoid Chinese overlordship. As for Saigon being "pluralist," as against the—admittedly very real—totalitarianism of Hanoi, it takes more than a few editorials to make the French, a notoriously skeptical breed, believe in such fairy tales.

Nor, for that matter, does an intellectual Tory like Mr. Enoch Powell take much stock in liberal imperialism. He knows the imperial age is over, for Britain anyway, and has given vent to some disabused reflections on the topic which fit in with his generally pessimistic view of the world. One needs to be a liberal to get really worked up about the beauties of the "freely expanding economy" and the wonders it is going to perform for Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the rest. Conservative pessimism, if it does nothing else, at least safeguards one from the disappointments that lie in wait for the worshiper of "economic growth." It was the liberals who got America into Vietnam. It is the conservatives—if there are any left—who will have to get her out.

II

I BEGAN by saying that there is something melancholy about the introspective character of so much British writing at the present time. The sadness is not lessened—for the authors and their public—by the reflection that the imperial burden was shed gracefully: at any rate in India, which was the center-piece of the whole global arrangement known in its heyday as the British Empire. Mr. Enoch Powell, in the hearing of the present writer, once remarked that the consciousness of the British ruling class (those were the words he used) had been shaped for two centuries by the Anglo-Indian connection. Mr. Powell was himself involved with Indian affairs, as a staff officer during the 1939-45 war, and if he ever finds time from more pressing engagements he might let the rest of us know what he thinks of the 1947 settlement imposed by Lord Louis Mountbatten in his capacity as Viceroy, acting on behalf of a Labour government which had granted him unprecedented plenipotentiary powers—that is to say, the right to make major decisions on the spot, without referring back to Whitehall.

This elegant aristocrat, who in 1945 made a point of telling everyone he was going to vote Socialist ("it's the kitchen staff who are Tory—the working classes are altogether a hopeless lot"), was admirably fitted for his Proconsular role. He got on well with those two detribalized intellectuals, Nehru and Jinnah, who wanted to drag their respective communities into the modern age of nationalism, and away from obsession with religion. He did not get on quite so well with Gandhi, the Mahatma of the Indian peasantry who opposed Partition, while Jinnah insisted on it, and Nehru acquiesced. In the end, the Moslems got what they wanted (they usually do, from whatever British government happens to be in office): India and Pakistan were established as separate states, after a ghastly communal slaughter which may have cost a million lives and which drove tens of millions from their homes. Hindus and Moslems butchered each other in the name of religion, as they had been doing for centuries and still do occasionally on a smaller scale. The topic is passed over rather briefly in Mr. H. V. Hodson's recent work on the subject, *The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan,* but then Mr. Hodson is an admirer of Mountbatten. Mr. Michael Edwardes, reviewing the book in the London *Times* of September 13, 1969, struck a caustic note:

> The end of an empire almost always takes place in blood—usually that of the imperialists. The distinction of the British was to lose their empire in that of their erstwhile subjects. From the British point of view it was a major achievement. . . . It is easy to accept that Lord Mountbatten's brief was simple and straightforward—for heaven's sake, get us out of India with the least harm to ourselves. Lord Mountbatten succeeded in doing what his political masters required, with aplomb and the appearance of dignity. I do not think anyone could have done better, and most would have done worse. . . .

Mr. Edwardes, who was in India at the time and knows the country well, then goes on to quote from the Report of the first Governor-General of

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the independent Dominion (now Republic) of India, to King George VI, dated November 25, 1948, a year after the great massacres in the Punjab which accompanied the setting up of two independent states on the ruins of the old Indian Empire:

> It had been obvious to anybody that there were going to be disturbances in the Punjab on the transfer of power. But I freely confess that I did not anticipate the scale and extent of what was going to happen, nor, so far as I am aware, did anyone in authority in India, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom anticipate this.

Who wrote these lines? Why, none other than Mountbatten, transmogrified from Viceroy into Governor-General, and still on excellent terms with Nehru, though by now somewhat less popular with the leaders of newly independent Pakistan, who felt let down because the Labour government was a shade less pro-Moslem than British governments normally tend to be. In 1969 Mr. Hodson, in his quasi-authoritative account of the matter, still takes the Establishment view that Lord Mountbatten did the right thing when he precipitated the partition of India, in the teeth of mounting evidence that the country would explode into communal massacres. His sources are mostly British. Mr. Edwardes's own book on the the subject, published some years ago, was based upon the testimony of Indian and Pakistani witnesses, "the most important of whom were dead by the time Mr. Hodson took up his task," as he sourly notes in his review. He does not say how many of them perished in the slaughter.

It is remarkable how stoical Europeans have usually been when confronted with happenings of this sort—in Asia. A single British soldier shot dead in Belfast during communal rioting between Irish Catholics and Protestants gets banner headlines in the papers. The great Indian disaster of 1947 has barely entered the public consciousness. Distance, and a sense of helplessness, presumably account nowadays for this seeming indifference, just as they account for the relative calm that greets the news from Nigeria. What can one do about it, and who cares about dead African babies anyway? Certainly not the New Left: its leaders have not uttered a sound on the subject. But then there is no political mileage to be got out of a conflict which opposes Africans (with some foreign backing) to each other. As for morality, we all know by now what the *Realpolitiker* of the New Left (not to mention the Old Right) think of such sickly bourgeois sentiments.

But back to our theme. Mr. Edwardes and Mr. Hodson are joined by Mr. David Dilks in a fairly conventional biography of a fairly conventional British Viceroy: *Curzon in India* deals with a bygone age of imperial splendor. It describes Curzon's septennial term, the high point of which was a squabble with Whitehall in 1901 over who was to pay for the expense of having India represented at the Coronation of Edward VII in London. Curzon protested that the country had recently suffered a famine, and won his point. His other worries had to do with possible Czarist Russian encroachments, and with the appearance on the political scene of a new kind of animal, the Bengali lawyer, decked out in European clothing and clutching a copy of J. S. Mill. His intervention made things very awkward. Curzon knew how to deal with the wild tribesmen of the Northwest ("brave as lions, wild as cats, docile as children"), but the Bengali politicians bored and irritated him:

> I am an Imperialist, and Imperialism is fatal to all their hopes. I hold the scales with exasperatingly even hand, but this is the last thing they desire . . . [it] deprives them of their most fertile source of grumbling.

Curzon was convinced the Empire would last, if not for ever, then at least for centuries. It would do so, he thought, because the stout peasantry would always prefer the fair-minded British official to the wily Bengali. Not to mention the hill tribesmen: "magnificent Samsons, gigantic, bearded, instinct with loyalty, often stained with crime"; mostly Moslems too and thus doubly contemptuous of town-bred Hindu politicians. An anonymous reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (August 14, 1969) struck a suitably disillusioned note:

> This sentimental polarization of noble savage and degenerate townee, subsequently to receive classic expression from T. E. Lawrence, became one of the major weaknesses of what passed for the British ideology of imperialism, and a source of countless political mistakes.

YES INDEED, but the official ideology had two sides to it. In addition to the romantic Toryism of Kipling, Lawrence, and sundry worshipers of mounted and bedaggered tribesmen, there was the bleak utilitarianism of Joseph Chamberlain and the Webbs. Chamberlain, the chief begetter of the Boer War and a charismatic figure to many Tories, in 1903 made a resolute but tactically ill-judged attempt to transmute the Empire into a fiscal *Zollverein* or customs union, on the Bismarckian model. At the same time, the Webbs turned the London School of Economics, which they controlled, into a nursery of the imperialist faith, preached *inter alia* by geopoliticians like Mackinder, whose wisdom was later transmitted to Britain's chief competitors by Mackinder's German pupils.

Needless to say, the British school was more civilized than the German, as anyone can discover by consulting the recently published first volume of Professor Max Beloff's definitive study on the subject: *Imperial Sunset,* subtitled *Britain's Lib-*

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*eral Empire 1897-1921.** Himself a representative of the once-great liberal tradition, Professor Beloff writes with some nostalgia of an age when statesmen, civil servants, scholars, and journalists saw the self-governing white-settler Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) as constitutional training-schools for the remainder. Unlike the romantic Tories, he has no illusions as to the evanescent nature of an imperial structure held together very largely by make-believe. Unlike the Chamberlainites, he does not believe an imperial customs union could have worked. On this point the Tory-imperialist standpoint has now been restated by Mr. Julian Amery in the concluding two volumes of a gigantic six-volume political biography of Joseph Chamberlain in progress since 1915, when it was first projected by the late J. L. Garvin.†

One may reasonably doubt whether Chamberlain—Beatrice Potter's idol long before she married the dutiful Colonial Office clerk Sidney Webb—is really worth all this attention, but he did have a coherent view of the world: a rare thing in British politics during a century when "muddling through" was elevated into doctrine. Moreover, the imperial creed had some support from intellectuals—Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Benjamin Jowett, and Karl Pearson among them. Not all its adherents were as repulsive as the loathsome Carlyle, whose racist tract *The Nigger Question* (1849) terminated his friendship with John Stuart Mill. The episode is not without significance. There *were* some liberal imperialists in Victorian Britain—Gladstone was merely the most celebrated—but by 1903, when Joseph Chamberlain launched his campaign, the liberal intellectuals had begun to turn away from the Empire. Its defense was left to Carlyle's spiritual heirs, Kipling among them. Even so, tariff reform gained some working-class support, and the social-imperialist creed already formulated by J. R. Seeley, the historian, had its effect on Fabians such as the Webbs and their circle. When the private discussion club they had founded split apart over the issue of protection versus free trade, Hewins—their nominee as director of the London School of Economics—resigned his post to become Chamberlain's chief propagandist. Mackinder, who succeeded him (once more thanks to the Webbs), shortly thereafter abandoned free trade, thereby complicating Beatrice Webb's intrigues with the Liberal leaders. The Liberals were loyal to the Empire, but unwilling to ditch free trade in favor of protection. Their electoral triumph in 1906 sounded the knell of tariff reform. Or rather, it delayed its acceptance until 1932, by which time the 1914-18 war had wrecked the Liberal party of Asquith and Lloyd George beyond repair. The remaining liberal imperialists—including Churchill—had now reluctantly joined the Tories, and in 1932-33 they hesitantly revived Joseph Chamberlain's old recipes of 1903. But by then it was too late—Japan was on the march, and so was Hitler.

Indian nationalism, too, could no longer be restrained, and its leaders had lost all interest in the preservation of the British Empire. Offered a measure of home rule by the Churchill government in 1942, when the Japanese were at the gates, Gandhi declined what he described as "a post-dated cheque on a bank that is obviously failing." The bank did not actually fail in 1942, but went into liquidation five years later, when the Attlee government sent Mountbatten to India to wind up its affairs. Which is where we came in, for the partition of 1947 was the consequence of a war in which the Indian army, for the second time in a generation, had defended the Empire against Britain's enemies. That same army was now about to split along national and religious lines, the coming confrontation between India and Pakistan already taking shape in the massacres that spelled the end of Gandhi's vision of a peaceful and united India.

III

Is there a moral in all this? It is hard to say. During the 19th century the only alternative to the British Empire in India was a return to primitivism or the Russian Empire, and the Tories were not alone in holding that either would be a disaster: Marx took the same view. However abominable British rule in India might be (he told the readers of the New York *Tribune* in 1853), it was at least preferable to the continuation of Oriental despotism. The Indian liberal nationalists of the following generation reasoned along similar lines. The trouble was that even the most moderate among them failed to make an impression upon British officialdom until it was too late for anything but the hurried surgical operation of 1947. By then few even among the Tories were willing to join Winston Churchill in a last-ditch stand against liquidating the Indian Empire.

The Attlee government of 1945-51 for its part simply carried on where the Liberals had left off. It did not repudiate imperialism as such. Rather it proclaimed that India had become ripe for self-government. This was the Gladstonian or liberal-imperialist faith in a nutshell. It had nothing whatever to do with socialism, popular notions to the contrary notwithstanding. Like the Fabian tradition in general, it was rooted in Bentham and Mill. But at least Mill was preferable to Carlyle with his savage contempt for colored

*Knopf, 400 pp., $8.95.

†*Joseph Chamberlain and the Tariff Reform Campaign: The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, Vol. 5, 1901-1903; Vol. 6, 1903-1968. St. Martin's, 1,008 pp. in all, $27.50 (for both volumes).

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races. Liberalism in this sense made possible a transition that did *not* commit the British to a disastrous attempt to hold down Indian nationalism by force: the sort of thing Germany and Japan committed themselves to in the 1930's. There are different imperialisms, even if they all suffer from the same basic taint.

The historical background is sketched in, with admirable clarity and precision, by that wittiest of contemporary British historians, Mr. V. G. Kiernan. *The Lords of Human Kind: European attitudes towards the outside world in the Imperial Age** is full of shrewd observations on the British Empire and its passing. It also has the merit of being composed in a graceful style and bearing its load of learning with an appearance of effortless ease:

> During the first millennium BC three new civilizations were taking shape, which among them came to rule or influence most of Asia, and which through many changes have lived on to our own day—the Persian, Indian and Chinese. They borrowed from the older ones; they differed from them first of all in their far greater size and comparative remoteness from each other, which allowed each to feel itself, like every human being, the hub and center of all things. Greece, the first "Europe," was also appearing, scattered in small units from Asia Minor to the western Mediterranean—a distance about as great as from India's north to south tip. It floated on the sea, the others belonged to dry land. The permanence of these four, with least continuity in Europe and most in China, has been as striking as the failure since then of any radically new civilization to grow up, except in Central and South America and, by synthesis of older with new elements, in the Islamic world.

Anyone capable of carrying on in this fashion for over 300 pages deserves public commendation. Mr. Kiernan conceals a mass of solid erudition behind a style modeled on Lytton Strachey. For good measure he is an undoctrinaire socialist. The combination of such rare gifts presumably accounts for his failure to climb the higher rungs of the academic establishment. The British have shed much of their Victorian solemnity, but it is still not considered quite proper for a scholar to display stylistic grace. Consider the following passage:

> Schopenhauer refuted pantheism by pointing out the absurdity of any God transforming himself into a world where on an average day six million slaves received sixty million blows. In the history of Negro slavery the extraordinary thing is the ability of the race to survive, though myriads of individuals perished; it lacked the faculty which Chinese exiles owed to a more complex social evolution of mastering a new environment and rising in it. It was the endurance of the African, where other enslaved races sank under the white man's burden, that made him so profitable; while his weakness in collective organization in his own land made him an easy prey. It warped his masters, Arab or Turk, Spaniard or Englishman, as much as it degraded him; it conditioned Western Europe to think of all "native" peoples as destined bondsmen.

I suspect promotion will be slow to come Mr. Kiernan's way. He knows too much, he writes too well, and he treads on too many toes. The dullards and the embattled political fanatics (of all colors) will see to it that he is kept out. Meantime the public should read his books. He writes as well as Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, and is more trustworthy as a source of information.

This question of tone is not to be dismissed lightly. In the heyday of British imperialism, between 1870 and 1914, its spokesmen affected a grave and learned manner, to the point of misquoting Hegel and other German philosophers. Their opponents frequently did the same. When in 1915 the first German bombs fell on London (from a Zeppelin—there were as yet no rockets), Professor L. T. Hobhouse judged the time ripe to rend the Hegelians. Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the State* (he told his hearers) had helped to spread pernicious Germanic notions, and the bombs now falling on their heads were but "the visible and tangible outcome of a false and wicked doctrine . . . the Hegelian theory of the God-state." Thirty years later Professor Karl Popper (with less excuse, since he was in New Zealand at the time, and no bombs were dropping on him) revived this piece of nonsense. But where did Hobhouse proclaim his message to the world? Why, at the London School of Economics, the great creation of the Webbs, where Hewins was succeeded by Mackinder, and imperialism (Conservative, Liberal, or Fabian) never lacked defenders. It is true that the Webbs and their circle were Benthamites, not Hegelians. It is no less true that they supplied the Establishment with an authoritarian doctrine suitably adapted to the age of imperialism.

With more old-fashioned Tories, who had mostly been brought up on Anglicanism, the Empire in some cases represented a transference of religious emotions to a secular object of worship. Imperial proconsuls occasionally felt in need of a Higher Power to sustain them in their labors. Lower down the social scale a kind of cynicism crept in after 1919 which foreshadowed the subsequent collapse into fascist nihilism. The classic case of course is T. E. Lawrence: "Lawrence of Arabia" to his admirers, "Lawrence the impostor" to readers of Richard Aldington's deadly biography, first published in 1955. Impostor or not, Lawrence already possessed some elements of a political outlook which became fairly common in the age of Stalin, Hitler,

*London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

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and Mussolini. This can be seen from the latest and most longwinded of the many books about him, *The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia* by Phillip Knightley and Colin Simpson. While the reviewers, like the authors, fastened mostly on his sexual aberrations, at least one reader was struck by a passage in Lawrence's correspondence which casts light on the imperialist mentality in its pre-fascist, but already distinctly smelly stage. He was outlining his plans in September 1919, at a time when he was busy intriguing simultaneously with the Arab nationalists and the Zionists to push the French out of Syria, and this is what he had to say in a confidential note to a close collaborator:

> The French will be on their best behaviour for months, and give Feisal his money unconditionally. Then they will try to turn the screw. He'll say he doesn't want their money, because by then the Zionists will have a centre in Jerusalem, and for concessions they will finance him (this is all in writing, and fixed, but don't put in the Press for God's sake and the French). Zionists are not a Government, and not British, and their action does not infringe the Sykes-Picot agreement. They are also Semites and Palestinian, and the Arab Government is not afraid of them (can cut all their throats, or better, pull all their teeth out, when it wishes). They will finance the whole East, I hope, Syria and Mesopotamia alike. High Jews are unwilling to put much cash into Palestine only, since that country offers nothing but a sentimental return. They want 6 per cent.

The vulgarity of the style matches the contents of a mind seemingly destined for a career among Mosley's Blackshirts had Lawrence not been killed in a road accident in 1935. His latest biographers are duly shocked because it turns out that he never had any use for the Arabs either: all he wanted was to turn the Middle East into another British protectorate. But who, except for his foolish admirers, ever doubted this? Of course Lawrence was a fraud. What else could a man be whose professional life was spent in betraying people to each other, intriguing behind the scenes, and posturing as the hero of a "desert rebellion" which never occurred anywhere but in the fevered imagination of some newspaper readers? It may be said with certainty that neither the Arabs nor the Jews were taken in by him: he was too clearly a poseur. But there is a not wholly trivial point to be made about Lawrence's language. That business about the Jews having "all their teeth pulled out" (even better than having their throats slit)—where did he get it from? The present writer was puzzled for an answer until he came upon a passage in Mr. John Gross's recently published *Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* recording Carlyle's opinion of the Jews:

> One of the less attractive medieval customs recorded, with a grim satisfaction, in *Past and Present* was the habit of extorting money from Jews by pulling out their teeth; and a vivid passage in Froude's biography describes Carlyle standing on the edge of Hyde Park, gazing at the Rothschild mansion and miming the same operation with an imaginary pair of pincers.

From *Past and Present* (1843) to *The Nigger Question* (1849) was no great jump for Carlyle. It would have been no great jump for Lawrence either. When all is said and done, the rise and fall of the imperialist ideology has a certain consistency about it.

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AT HAZOR as the remains of an ancient Canaanite city are uncovered, perhaps the diggers recall its capture by Joshua's army 3,200 years ago and wonder how it looked seven centuries earlier when Abraham passed nearby with his family, herd and flocks on their Biblical journey southward. Today, every archaeological exploration in Israel is indeed a joyous event.

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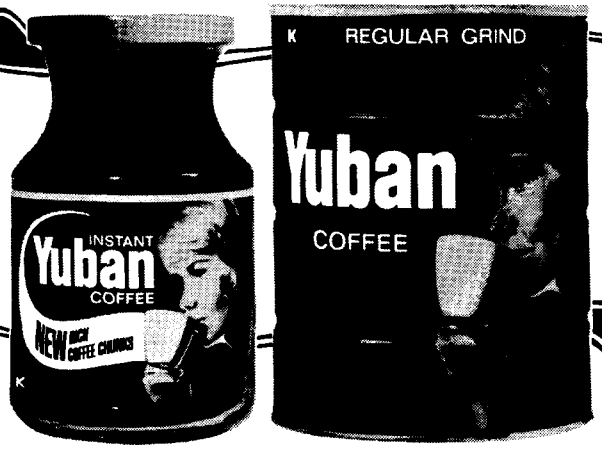

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1968

Walter Goodman

ONCE MORE into the snows of New Hampshire! Once more the tear gas of Chicago! There's no escaping the 1968 election. The relentless newspaper and television coverage at the time, followed hard by all those authoritative magazine articles and dinner-party autopsies, and, at length, the books,* which, by now, one approaches in duty rather than desire. An egregious case of journalistic overkill, and those of us who lived through the year are doomed to go into our dotage boring juniors with tales of the fall of the House of Johnson. Yet the event did compel inspection, and does invite retrospection. Nineteen sixty-eight, after all, was a most extraordinary political year.

Among the exhilarating victories and punishing defeats of that year, liberals can look back with least anger to the McCarthy movement itself. In its spontaneity, its unprofessional character, its concentration on issue rather than on party, it was very much the New Politics. Despite efforts to broaden the candidate's appeal by moving on to other matters and despite a rankling within the ranks of discontent with the entire system, the Establishment, the style of American politics, McCarthy for President remained from first to last a one-issue movement. Vietnam is what brought out these rebels with a single cause, and sustained them to the bitter August and beyond.

This progression, of the issue finding the man, has one striking equivalent in this century—the Henry Wallace campaign of 1948, no invidious comparisons intended. The man found in 1968, after others had turned prudently away (Robert Kennedy having checked with Mayor Daley and decided that opposition to Johnson promised no profit), was an unusual type for American politics, but in him one could recognize a bit of Wilson, a bit of Stevenson. (They all could put an English sentence together, for example, without perspiring.) An important part of his support came from people whose first campaigning was done in 1952—but Stevenson had been handpicked by Democratic bosses whereas McCarthy was the people's own. It was on their issue that he would stand and, predictably, fall. But though he was the candidate of a movement—and not even its first choice—he remained very much his own man, to the pride, the concern, and the exasperation of his supporters. "I am what I am," he told them, "and I won't be changing."

MCCARTHY PROVED to be a politician with a flagrant disdain for politicking. One could sometimes sense such disdain in Stevenson too, of course, and even in John F. Kennedy. But Stevenson's ironies tended to be directed at himself and Kennedy's were mastered as he attended most professionally to the business at hand. McCarthy's darts were aimed outward; in 1960, he said that he was "twice as liberal as Hubert Humphrey, twice as intelligent as Stuart Symington, and twice as Catholic as Jack Kennedy." His air of weary superiority became a feature of the primary campaign. Theodore White, by now the Establishment chronicler, tells us that Robert Kennedy thought of McCarthy as "vain and lazy." Not a wildly unfair judgment—and one can understand that in the eyes of the restless Bobby, ever on the move, ever on the lookout for the action, McCarthy's languid airs would come down to that. McCarthy was a rare embodiment of the intellectual in politics—a somewhat petulant intellectual by all accounts, and a peevish politician, lacking the graces that permitted Adlai Stevenson to soften the image.

At the outset, for his supporters in universities and publishing houses, his low-key manner, his private gags, his rejection of electioneering clichés, were sources of great pleasure. The hated figure in 1968 was Lyndon Johnson, a man so mired in the ways of Texas back rooms and the Senate cloakroom that he could not bring himself to utter the most straightforward sentiment without making it seem hokum. It was an art. Against him, in refreshing contrast, stood McCarthy, cool of style, free of baloney. At the funeral of Martin Luther King, Herzog reports, McCarthy purposely kept himself out of the TV camera's eye.

IT HAS happened before that, at a certain point, a political leader's most engaging qualities begin to wear upon his followers. Wilson's firmness became rigidity; Theodore Roosevelt's outspokenness turned to bluster; Stevenson's penchant for public reflection came to seem mere indecisiveness, a form of ineptitude. As the primary campaign progressed, it became evident that McCarthy's style, too, had its limitations. It

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WALTER GOODMAN, *who writes frequently on the American political scene, is the author of* The Committee, *a study of the House Un-American Activities Committee.*

* The books at hand are: *The Making of a President, 1968,* by Theodore H. White, Atheneum, 459 pp., $10.00; *An American Melodrama—The Presidential Campaign of 1968,* by Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson, and Bruce Page, Viking, 832 pp., $10.00; *The Year of the People,* by Eugene J. McCarthy, Doubleday, 360 pp., $6.95; *McCarthy for President,* by Arthur Herzog, Viking, 309 pp., $6.95; *The Selling of the President 1968* by Joe McGinniss, Trident, 253 pp., $5.95; *Winning's a Lot More Fun,* by Stephen C. Shadegg, Macmillan, 278 pp., $6.95. [Several books that deal with Robert Kennedy's role in the political events of 1968 will be discussed separately in a forthcoming issue.—ED.]

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did not work in the ghettos; he could not give black audiences what they wanted, needed. Either it was not in him, or if it was, he did his damnedest to repress it: "Stirring up the people . . . was not my style." He could barely abide the hyped-up stage manner of some of his hardest-working supporters—upon whom he did not lavish gratitude, either in his campaign or in his book.

This characteristic coolness of his, whether constitutional or, as he holds, a matter of principle, led McCarthy into self-defeating actions. When the Russians marched into Czechoslovakia, his initial response, to the anger and despair of his counselors, was to pass it off with a crack about the pointlessness of Johnson's summoning a night-time meeting of the National Security Council. For a liberal, such a reaction to the Soviet aggression was hardly defensible—and yet one may spare some admiration for the man's reluctance to do the easiest thing in the American political world, the most banal thing, to do what could not possibly harm any candidate in any U.S. election, to do what every hack in Congress was doing—blow hard against the Communists. (Herzog, a partisan, tells us McCarthy regretted the incident—but in his own book he makes no apologies for his "restraint.")

Again, in his television "debate" with Robert Kennedy, for which the McCarthy camp had been pressing for weeks and on which they pinned hopes for victory in the California primary, McCarthy started off strong and then seemed to lose interest in the whole point-scoring exercise. It was as though he could not rouse, or fake, the enthusiasm required to spend an hour in competing with Bobby over who could say nicer things about Israel and Negroes. Vanity, without doubt, but not bad taste.

FOR HIS campaign workers, committed to the good battle, their man's default in the debate (McCarthy himself counts it "a draw") and his other periodic withdrawals were immensely frustrating. They wanted more fire from him, more aggressiveness; nothing immoral in this—and, in all likelihood, tactically sound. Yet in calling on him to come out slugging, they were closer than their candidate to the spirit of the old politics. The remarkable thing about McCarthy in the dim galaxy of America's political aspirants was that he did not have to win. Life would go on, the world would go on, poets would write their poems even if Richard Nixon occupied the White House. He seemed to draw strength from knowing who he was and was not—an uncommon certainty for a politician in heat—and retaining his sense of himself when all around him were trying to turn him into something else. (His book, seemingly detached, but highly defensive and somewhat evasive, conveying mainly the negative side of the man's style, doesn't much help us understand how he came through 1968 intact.) The long view of history, basic to the intellectual's equipment, is no asset in a tough campaign, and will always raise problems for the intellectual as campaigner. As much because of his temperament as of his intellect, McCarthy did not resolve those problems in 1968, and his subsequent actions, such as leaving the Foreign Affairs Committee and his announced decision to depart the Senate, indicate a turn toward that more private existence where the intellectual tends to be most at home. Still, one imagines he will find it a strain after all these years to forgo politics altogether. He is already under pressure to come forward again, and the pressure will continue to build in the absence of another liberal champion.

TO DO one's thing in politics with some hope of success a politician had best not be noticeably ironical, introspective, or philosophical —that is taken for granted. One need only contrast the joy that Harry Truman found in the kitchen of politics with the vague discomfort that hung about Adlai Stevenson. In 1968, the contrast, by no means of an identical kind, was between Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy, who, on his belated entrance into the campaign, immediately filled the "passion gap" which McCarthy's supporters recognized and lamented. Bobby was a smash in the ghettos. Every account of his campaign plays heavily on the eager, reaching, rather unnerving crowds which his managers corralled. He sought them out, and they responded to him wholeheartedly. The only candidate who aroused a similar kind and degree of response was George Wallace. For the most part, of course, Kennedy and Wallace spoke to different audiences and, most of the time, with different appeals, yet in the rallies of both one sensed the personal impact, the man getting directly at his audience, the visceral thing. We saw the phenomenon of white lower-middle-class voters responding to *both* these men, tempted to vote for one and then for the other, despite the fact that they were on different sides of the major issues of Vietnam and the ghettos. (Except memorably, in Indiana, where the two seemed to come together on the desirability of law and order. Kennedy did not let his audiences there forget that "I was, for three and a half years, chief law-enforcement officer of the United States.")

KENNEDY AS campaigner was a more familiar figure in American politics than McCarthy. He played the game like touch football, grabbing an issue, hugging it to him and charging with it as the cheers rang out. For those standing outside the crowd, the performances could seem a bit suspect. Kennedy was prone to that flaring demagoguery familiar in our populist tradition, which gives each audience what it seems to want and gives it in a manner not usually conducive to clear thinking. Not that he was a charlatan. Certainly he was moved by the ghettos, by the poor—and he was certainly moved by himself.

Kennedy worked the charisma line—probably he had no choice—and to persons attracted to the McCarthy style, the younger man's self-dramatization was off-key. Along with his reputation for "ruthlessness" and his celebrated ambition, his method of campaigning created a lack of trust that further embittered allies on

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the Left. But, then, the capacity of liberals and radicals to hate one another has always been astounding. (McCarthy himself writes that while he came to accept Bobby's commitment, at least after the assassination, he ended the campaign with doubts as to the integrity and judgment of some of his supporters, "who, it seemed to me, were more interested in having power, or being in the presence of power, than they were in the issues. . . ." McCarthy would carry his animosity to the Kennedy coterie into the convention and then to the Senate where he voted for Russell Long over Edward Kennedy as Democratic whip. Not a forgiving politician, our Gene.)

AFTER THE Walpurgisnacht of the Chicago convention, the free-flowing bitterness was all directed at Hubert Humphrey, personification of the Democratic party, circa 1932. This amiable public servant, with a record of accomplishment in the Senate that made Bobby Kennedy seem puerile and Eugene McCarthy lazy at best, was now vilified on the streets by youths who saw him only as Mayor Daley's serving boy and Lyndon Johnson's doormat. Our young scholars, of course, are resolutely uninterested in history, except as it suits their predilections, and now many persons of middle age, who had no difficulty in remembering the dreadful things that Nixon did to Helen Gahagan Douglas twenty years before or Bobby Kennedy's connection with Joe McCarthy, allowed themselves to forget Humphrey's lifetime of devotion to their battles. Where Kennedy, by instinct, was to be found at the center of every new, vital, or seemingly vital, impulse, Humphrey, who had been in the fore of most of the liberal causes that had engaged America since World War II, who had worked his way up to the respect of all the strong men of his party, was now, despite everything, an outsider, burbling about his Politics of Joy.

Humphrey, a simple man compared with a Kennedy or a McCarthy, is assured of his place among the most decent as well as the most effective politicians produced by the conventional political process in his generation. One does not operate in the Senate as productively as he did without becoming adept at ordinary, gross give-and-take; that was his strength and his weakness. He accepted the Vice Presidency under Lyndon Johnson, and gave his loyal all in that high, demeaning role, never grasping the extent of his personal disaster. Whereas Bobby Kennedy died without having quite found his manhood in politics, Humphrey, who had found his long before, allowed himself to be unmanned by Lyndon Johnson. By 1968, even Johnson understood that "Hubert is just too old-fashioned, he looks like, he talks like he belongs to the past." So much for Hubert, who wept when he first read Johnson's statement that he would not run in 1968: "No, Mr. President, you don't mean it." There is no more telling scene in the books on the election than the one in which Humphrey settles himself before the TV set in his hotel suite to count the delegate votes he knew he had, while madness raged on the streets below. Both McCarthy and Kennedy, in their distinct ways, could understand something of the madness, but not Humphrey. Perhaps twenty years before he would have understood; perhaps he would have been in the streets.

THE INSULTS of the street troopers after the nomination scarcely touched Richard Nixon. But then Nixon, after all, had been innocently making money in New York and Florida and eating chicken at GOP banquets everywhere while a half million soldiers were being sent to Vietnam. Thus it came about that one of the most detested figures in American politics in this century was allowed to conduct his campaign in relative tranquility while one of the best-liked men was treated to hollers of "Hump the Hump!"

The changes which eight years had wrought in Nixon's personality have been remarked by all observers, and all agree that they were for the better. Despite an invincible awkwardness that made it seem he was being fitted for a suit of clothes every time he raised his arms in victory, he was more at ease, with himself and with the world, than in the dark days of 1960 and 1962. A certain resignation had brought his ambition under control; the combination of political defeat and private success after joining Mudge, Stern, Baldwin, and Todd had evidently tempered the man. (Nevertheless, McGinniss reports at second-hand, he positively hates psychiatrists.) There is not much to be said in praise of Nixon the candidate; beside Humphrey his record was insignificant; beside McCarthy he was unprincipled (he had a solution for the war, you remember, but was keeping it secret); beside Bobby Kennedy—who had also changed greatly over the years and was still changing, in a direction that is far from clear even now—he was pale gray. In the Oregon primary, Bobby lost and was, as usual, mobbed; Nixon won and White came upon him dining quietly, unmolested by autograph hounds in a hotel restaurant.

ONE GOES through the Shadegg book as one went through Nixon's own book, *Six Crises*, looking in vain for what it is, even in a general way, that Richard Nixon is committed to on matters of the public interest. (The McGinniss book about Nixon's TV campaign doesn't help either, but at least it's funny.) As good a characterization as any of his political position comes from the aide who saw him as "neither a conservative, nor a liberal; he's a centrist." The Nixon strategy for the 1968 campaign—that famous Southern strategy which gave up the Negroes and the big cities and went for the border states and the Great White America Out There—was conceived from necessity and then shrewdly developed. Nixon celebrated "the non-shouters, the non-demonstrators," and patronized them shamelessly: "They are good people, decent people; they work, they save, they pay their taxes, they care." His motto for a time was "Bring Us Together"—but he did not mean all of us. No welfare cases here, no snotty kids or

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wise-aleck intellectuals, no unmannerly blacks. Nixon understood his constituency as well as Kennedy and McCarthy understood theirs, and Nixon's was bigger.

Nixon, as President, is past that period of his life when it was necessary for him to behave like a vicious opportunist. He has arrived, and if the first year of his Presidency is a guide, he would like now to be the master of a cruise ship where all the passengers above tourist class have an agreeable time. Our captain, with an eye to avoiding storm centers, with a delicate hand on the wheel (somewhat biased toward starboard but not so much as to disturb the deck games), aspires not toward any far lands but merely for a placid journey. The ship's chaplain, Dr. Billy Graham.

IT IS depressing, but instructive, that the Year of the New Politics should also have been the year of Richard Nixon. He, no less than Robert Kennedy, spoke for the "people." His victory ought to remind those of us who do not travel enough that Nixon country is a big place; its residents are comfortable but nervous; probably they don't like psychiatrists either. In the minds of millions last November, the riots, disruptions, muggings, pornography, and street rhetoric all came together like a threatening beast. And up against the monster rose Square Richard, so familiar from the good, quiet Eisenhower days.

The reason that the Nixon strategists could resign themselves to the loss of the big cities in 1968, aside from their deal with the Southerners, was that the old liberal alliance was in disarray, white unionists, black militants, and random intellectuals not finding quite so much in common as once they did. The alliance was not entirely unstuck, but it was far from solid. A late drive by the unions, fearful of Wallace's strength among their members, is credited with bringing Humphrey close to Nixon—but the drive *was* late, and discontent was evident. Honorable men divided for honorable reasons over whether to vote for Humphrey in November. To some it seemed absurd to depose the monarch and then crown his buddy; to others it seemed masochistic not to vote against Nixon. Had the Democratic dissidents gone all out for Humphrey, the election might have wound up in the House of Representatives, where Wallace would have exercised a certain leverage. (It has become almost gospel in liberal circles that had Kennedy lived, he would assuredly have been nominated in Chicago and if nominated, he would assuredly have won. Many persons would agree with Herzog that McCarthy, too, would have beaten Nixon. Well, maybe. To dispute this faith now would be neither kind nor useful.)

Against the feuding Left, the Republicans can, for now, count on their "centrist" movement, which has hardened in response to the commotion on streets and campuses. Your ordinary citizen cannot be expected to make nice distinctions between youths who bust up classrooms and youths who work in primaries; they all have long hair. As the ghettos and universities were being radicalized, the nation was drawing back; for the moment, Richard Nixon stands as the major beneficiary of the radicalization process.

Perhaps it is not unutterably guileless to assume that we are on our way to reducing our Vietnam commitment drastically—which would mean that among the problems of liberals looking forward to 1972 is that of rebuilding their alliance around issues that are not so passion-stirring as a futile war. The base of the renewed alliance will, we may assume, be the McCarthy-Kennedy cadres, their sources of strength in suburbs as well as cities; it will be more a white-collar movement than a blue. As for a candidate, a position that remains unclaimed since the scotching of Edward Kennedy, the 1968 experience holds out the hope that if the issues are important enough to enough people, leaders will come forward to argue them. May they be as unconventional as Eugene McCarthy.

For the foreseeable future the Republican political position is strong, but hardly invulnerable. George Wallace got ten million votes in 1968, four million of them outside the South, despite the handicap of his bomb-specialist running-mate, General Curtis LeMay. A Wallace movement in 1972 could give Nixon a bad headache, and he can look for no aspirin on the Left. So we can anticipate that his balancing act—Finch against Mitchell, Moynihan against Thurmond—will lose even the semblance of balance, as events draw the President and his party insensibly further and further to the Right. Observing this drift, the national Democrats will be tempted to follow, reasoning that the Left has no choice but to vote against Nixon, be he old, new, or supernew Nixon. Maybe that will work, but the course has its hazards. The South is gone or going, and the Democrats are in no position to compete with the Attorney General, that tough guy, in declaiming on law-and-order. In any case, it will fall to the McCarthyans and Kennedyites (who, let us hope, will have laid aside their quarrel by then) to direct their party's leaders onto a more worthy road. That seems feasible, for the Democratic chiefs must know that their machine is damaged and there is considerable interest in the air for a breakaway to a third (or is it fourth?) party. The more difficult job facing the liberal-radical alliance is to convince some millions of residents of Square America—who have shown themselves by no means unresponsive to appeals to their intelligence or their humanity—that the causes of peace, civil rights, and social justice are not in the exclusive possession of confrontationists.

Nietzsche in His Letters

Werner J. Dannhauser

"HAVE I BEEN understood?" Nietzsche asks repeatedly in *Ecce Homo,* a book he completed less than a month before madness enveloped him. He had every reason to raise the question, and in fact

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he did raise it in various guises throughout his life, sometimes as an anguished cry of defiance against the world's neglect of him, at other times in connection with providing hints for the world's proper perception of him. Earlier that same year, in a letter of July 29, 1888, he had written to Carl Fuchs: "If you should ever come round to writing about me . . . be sensible enough—as nobody has been till now—to characterize me, to 'describe'—but not to 'evaluate.' . . . It is not necessary at all—nor even desirable—that you should argue in my favor; on the contrary, a dose of curiosity, as in the presence of a foreign plant, with an ironic resistance, would seem to me an incomparably more intelligent attitude."

That was more than eighty years ago. Today, Nietzsche's influence is plain to see—among poets who cherish his call to creativity, among priests who have convinced themselves that the proclamation of God's death was an act of piety, among existentialists who admire his premises and shun his conclusions, among psychoanalysts who fancy they have solved the riddle of the "self" (the id) he took such care to describe as radically mysterious; having first cast his shadow over the Old Right, which used and abused him, he now casts his shadow over the New Left, which owes more to him than it dare acknowledge—and yet it would be rash to say that Nietzsche has been understood.

For those who read only English, there is a special problem: much of Nietzsche is as yet unavailable in English, or available only in shoddy translations. And surprisingly enough, the first really serviceable collection of his letters in English has appeared only recently.* It includes only about one-tenth of Nietzsche's total correspondence, but Christopher Middleton, the editor and translator, has chosen intelligently. His translations, while much too free, are always readable, and his notes are more often than not informative. This volume can help the reader to characterize and describe Nietzsche so that he may begin to understand him.

Letters, to be sure, are always an uncertain and often a treacherous path to what is most important about a thinker: his thought. One is forever tempted to reduce the public utterances of the thinker to symptoms of his private life. Ironically enough, the doctrine that thought ought to be psychoanalyzed rather than analyzed owes much of such philosophical respectability as it can be said to have to Nietzsche, and few men have suffered as much from its application as Nietzsche. For in his case the psychoanalytic temptation is especially strong; one knows he went mad so one wants to look for signs or anticipations of madness everywhere, and his letters are bound to present themselves in this respect as particularly fertile ground.

The kindred temptation is to mythologize Nietzsche, to see his life as larger than life. Nietzsche himself encouraged this tendency; the concluding chapter of *Ecce Homo* is entitled, "Why I Am a Destiny." Needless to say, the temptation must be resisted, for by succumbing to it one abdicates all perspective; one raises all events in his life to cosmic significance and thereby inevitably fails once again to do justice to the major event: his thought. When reading Nietzsche's letters—as well as his books, of course—it seems safest to be guided by his encouragement of an "ironic resistance" toward him.

If we preserve our benevolent skepticism when turning to Nietzsche's correspondence, a preliminary conclusion seems almost inescapable: Nietzsche was not a great writer of letters. His books are, whatever else may be said about them, unfailingly interesting, but his letters are occasionally dull, and they are repetitive to an extent that manifests itself even in so strict a selection as Mr. Middleton has achieved. Moreover, Nietzsche's distinctive style, in which he took such legitimate pride, is not well suited for epistolary communication; for that it is too jarring, too nervous; for that it is not classic enough. But above all, Nietzsche seems to have lacked all the basic prerequisites of the great writer of letters. Thus he was anything but a man of the world; he was the very antithesis of what we call an "outgoing personality"; he was lacking in friends and perhaps even in the capacity for friendship; neither his life nor his life-style qualifies as "exciting" in the usual sense of that word; and he was amazingly reticent about "philosophizing" in his letters.

Notwithstanding all this, the reading of Nietzsche's letters can be an instructive, and finally a shattering, experience. The letters do help us to understand Nietzsche's life, and though we must beware of any biographical trivialization of his thought, there is no denying that in Nietzsche's case life and thought were intertwined to a degree that is rare among philosophers. That is what makes the letters instructive; what makes them shattering is the insight they provide into the agony of a thinker's quest in our time.

II

The letters in this volume, supplemented by valuable chronologies, enable one to attain a clear overview of Nietzsche's life. Mr. Middleton's selections begin with the year 1865, when Nietzsche is already twenty-one and a student in Bonn; but he is to be pardoned for omitting earlier letters. The latter, most of them written while the young Nietzsche was at boarding school, are usually to his family; besides telling us more than we need to know about his money and laundry problems, they reveal only that he was a rather priggish lad. In Bonn, and later at Leipzig, we see Nietzsche as a student of classical philology. Learning seems to come almost effortlessly to him, though he has his doubts about philology even as he is in the process of mastering it. He knows it involves pointless drudgery and a deadening pedantry. Nevertheless, he persists, partly because he is bent on disciplining himself, but mostly because philology provides him with an access to the world of the Greeks, so different from the Germany of his time and the Protes-

Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, edited and translated by Christopher Middleton. University of Chicago Press, 330 pp., $10.00.

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tant environment of his home. But philology is to him merely the handmaiden of philosophy.

In 1869, Nietzsche becomes a professor of classical philology at Basel. The appointment represents an extraordinary success for a young man not yet twenty-five; he cannot know that this first worldly success is to be his last. The young admirer of Schopenhauer's pessimism is full of hope: he will rescue philology from antiquarianism, he will sponsor a revival of German culture. At the end of 1871—almost the last year he is to call "a good year"—he writes to his mother and sister: ". . . my time of activity begins." He is referring to the impending publication of his first book: henceforth his books will *be* his life.

The Birth of Tragedy achieves notoriety rather than acclaim among philologists, who, according to Nietzsche, promptly pronounce him "dead to scholarship." The book, which contains not a single footnote, is an uneasy combination of bold speculations about the origins of tragedy, brilliant reflections on Socrates (it is the first anti-Socratic book by a philosopher), and a call for the revitalization of Germany through the art of a new Aeschylus—Richard Wagner. It is Nietzsche's closeness to Wagner which sustains him when the philologists excommunicate him.

Wagner and Nietzsche meet first in Leipzig in 1868. Wagner, who is more than thirty years older than Nietzsche and already a famous man, is gracious and charming to the brilliant young student. When Nietzsche moves to Basel he takes to visiting Wagner, who lives nearby. There ensues a close relationship which does not finally break off until the end of 1876. Nietzsche's letters to Wagner are the most painful of all his letters to read, for Nietzsche fawns on Wagner. Which is not to say that he is insincere. Beneath Wagner's charm, to be sure, there lurks a monster of a man, a man insatiable in his demands on all around him, a suspicious and petty tyrant, an egotist of colossal proportions. Wagner ruthlessly exploits and bullies Nietzsche, seeing in him not the future giant of 19th-century philosophy, but rather an exceptionally gifted propagandist for Wagner's cause. Still, Wagner *is* a genius, almost the archetype of the genius-as-artist, and Nietzsche, already preoccupied with the problem of genius, knows this. He cherishes his friendship with Wagner, meanwhile producing the *Thoughts out of Season,* which raises cultural criticism to new heights.

But Nietzsche, too, is a genius, and his thought is in the process of developing. Questioning his own affirmations, he comes to see *through* Wagner, comes to realize that the genius is also an actor, an inauthentic self, comes to see that the gold of the music is surrounded by the dross of philistinism, comes finally to see that the music itself is full of dross. The break is inevitable, acrimonious, and painful. The Wagnerites, and Wagner himself, turn on Nietzsche with the special vitriol reserved for apostates. Nietzsche fights back. Yet, though he writes to Gast in 1883 that "Wagner's death brought me the greatest relief I could have had" (this during a winter he describes as "the worst in my life"), Nietzsche is finally just to Wagner; to the end of his life he remembers his first encounter with genius in gratitude.

TURNING AWAY from Wagner, Nietzsche enters a new epoch in his life. He abandons his apprenticeship to Schopenhauer, his pious hopes for Germany, the lure of metaphysics, and the mystique of art; he now pays homage to Western positivism, the sobriety of modern science, the spirit of the Enlightenment: he dedicates his next book, published in 1878, to Voltaire. The very title, *Human, All-Too Human,* declares that he has relinquished his reverence, even as the style, taut and aphoristic, proclaims his farewell to an earlier exuberance. Wagner's rhapsode has become the free spirit. Rootless and continually ill, Nietzsche wanders from place to place: Sorrento, Lugano, Rosenlauibad. Briefly, he returns to Basel, resigns his professorship, and then the wandering begins anew: Marienbad, Genoa, Sils Maria. He wrests from loneliness a kind of bracing joy; the titles of his next two books—*The Dawn of Day, The Gay Science*—reflect the gleaning of sunlight from the winter of his life. Sometimes he falters, as when he writes to Malwida von Meysenbug, in January 1880, that "my life's terrible and almost unremitting martyrdom makes me thirst for the end," but he is always willing to pay the price for his "dreadful freedom," and for the understanding of what it means to be free.

What Nietzsche comes to understand is that to be truly free is not the same as being a free spirit. "First, one has the difficulty of emancipating oneself from one's chains; and ultimately, one has to emancipate oneself from this emancipation too!" The words are from a letter of August 1882 to Lou Salome, who is later to become the mistress of Rilke and the friend of Freud. When Nietzsche meets her, she is a twenty-one-year-old emigrée from Russia, ambitious, fiercely bright. Nietzsche is among the first of her many conquests, though it is never quite clear whether Nietzsche wants to be her lover or her teacher. For Nietzsche now has a whole new cosmos of ideas. His own emancipation from emancipation has involved an enigmatic vision of the doctrine of the eternal return of the same, a vision revealed to him (one needs religious imagery to describe it) while he is in the mountains in 1881. Nietzsche's relationship with Lou, unhappy as are almost all his relationships with other human beings, coincides with the beginning of the third period of his life, the period in which the free spirit becomes the willing prisoner of what he calls his "task." It is a period which begins, in 1882, amid the euphoria of an imagined return of his health due to sheer will power ("I was in all respects my own doctor") and ends amid the euphoria of madness in 1889.

1883-1885 are the "Zarathustra years." Nietzsche considers *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* a new—and superior—Bible, but, possessed now by his "task," he also thinks of it

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as a mere portico to the mansion of his final philosophy. Descending from the inspirational heights of Zarathustra, he becomes in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and the *Genealogy of Morals* (1887), the commentator on his own text. Five more books follow in rapid succession, but the final philosophy is never produced. In January 1889, Nietzsche becomes hopelessly insane. His mother cares for him at the family home in Naumburg until her death in 1897. Thereafter, Elizabeth moves her brother to Weimar, Goethe's shrine. As his fame spreads in the 1890's, Nietzsche becomes steadily more docile, silent, comatose. His second death occurs in 1900.

III

WHILE THE letters make it easy enough to construct such an outline of Nietzsche's life, they do not lend themselves easily to the task of assessing the meaning of his life. Their quality may tend to lull one into forgetting that they come from the pen of a major thinker and thus to incline one to regard Nietzsche as merely an eccentric crank, a man of mercurial moods ranging from suicidal despair to outright megalomania. This does not mean that one will simply dismiss Nietzsche, for his character is bound to emerge as somehow attractive, or even admirable. The faults, the weaknesses, the self-deceptions are there to see in abundance, but they are such as beset all men, and they do not prevent Nietzsche's fundamental trustworthiness and basic truthfulness from shining through. Nevertheless, one does Nietzsche an injustice if, in reading the letters, one does not continually remind oneself of the objective and independent evidence of his greatness. For example, when Nietzsche writes to his former teacher Ritschl, in 1872, that "I thought if ever you had met with anything promising in your life, it might be this book . . . ," one must remember that the book in question is *The Birth of Tragedy* (certainly the most "promising" thing produced by any of Ritschl's students), lest one mistake a warranted assertion for vanity or arrogance. Similarly, the increasing stridency of the later letters—"It needs *greatness* of soul for a person to stand any of my writings at all"—must not make one forget that the "writings" include *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil.*

If, however, one keeps Nietzsche's greatness firmly in mind, new problems arise. The very blandness of much of his correspondence becomes intriguing, but one obstacle after another confronts the effort to fathom the depth of his life. Thus one discovers that Nietzsche is very much detached from most of what happens to him. He seems bemusedly to watch as the external events of his life unfold before him. "Everything personal is indeed comic," he writes, and manages to be impersonal even when writing about himself—which is nearly always. Nor is the opaqueness of the letters simply a matter of reticence, though Nietzsche is certainly reticent. It is more nearly a matter of loving "the hiddenness of life" (the phrase is from a letter to Lou Salome), of sensing that what is most real is also what is most beyond direct communication. Nietzsche, after all, is the thinker who in his writings dons one mask after another: he is Zarathustra, Dionysus, the anti-Christ, an "old artillery-man," a buffoon, the "clown of the new eternities." In this respect, the letters are of a piece with the books; they, too, are merely what Nietzsche calls "foreground"; they, too, are part of the game he plays with masks. Finally, however, the man who wears many masks reveals much more about himself than the man who hides behind one mask, for it becomes possible to see what remains constant beyond all changes of role. In the case of Nietzsche, two such "constants" are readily identifiable: solitude and illness.

IV

NIETZSCHE'S IS THE correspondence of a lonely man; the typical Nietzsche letter is one written while he lives somewhere in solitude and strives for human contact. The "Index of Recipients" printed at the end of *The Selected Letters* shows the narrowness of his circle of acquaintance, and few of the people to whom he wrote could be counted as friends.

One certainly cannot count his family. Indeed, the great number of letters Nietzsche wrote to his mother and sister itself attests to the dearth of genuine friendships in his life. The ones to his mother are rather ordinary in their perfunctory filial piety and concern to spare her as much knowledge as possible of the fact that she had not succeeded in raising an "ideal" son, but many of those to his sister are plainly occasioned by the absence of people in whom he could confide or who could extend the care he needed. It so happened that Nietzsche's sister Elizabeth was a vindictive shrew of limited intelligence who caused her brother much pain. This is well-known—as a matter of fact it is too well-known: his sister has commonly been made the scapegoat for all that went wrong in Nietzsche's life. What is more, because she perpetrated some minor forgeries on Nietzsche's *Nachlass* she has even been blamed for what is wrong with Nietzsche's thought, as if Nietzsche were basically a "harmless" thinker whose work became totally disfigured by her manipulations. What is less well-known today is that she was, for many years, completely devoted to her brother, who was, to say the least, a problematic object of devotion. Nietzsche was aware of the grave defects in Elizabeth's character: if he chose to put up with her it was because, as he wrote Malwida von Meysebug in 1884, "I know what can be said to excuse my sister and what is at the back of her (to me) so despicable and undignified behavior—love."

While nothing can stop armchair psychologists from seeing Nietzsche's intermittent closeness to his sister as a substitute for a love affair, it is more reasonable to understand the relationship as a substitute for friendship, which to Nietzsche was the highest kind of love. Nietzsche seems to have been remarkably free of erotic longings, describing himself to his friend Rohde (in 1875) as "a man not wracked by the passions," but he never ceased to extol the idea

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of friendship. Friendship is a recurrent theme of both his letters and his books; few philosophers have written so eloquently and extensively on the subject as Nietzsche. Indeed, when one considers Nietzsche's rather prickly nature, one is tempted to say that he preferred the idea of friendship to such friendships as can exist in the real world.

IN ANY event, the great advocate of friendship had few friends. Almost none of his relationships measures up to the rarefied ideal which Nietzsche cherished. His contact with Wagner does not quite qualify because Wagner always held himself above Nietzsche, and his contact with many others does not qualify because Nietzsche obviously held himself to be above *them*. Thus Peter Gast was never more than Nietzsche's only real disciple, a loyal but mediocre man whom Nietzsche overestimated, largely because he received so little genuine praise in his life that he succumbed easily to flattery. Thus, too, while Nietzsche made a number of friendships during his youth, maintaining some of them for many years, they did not ordinarily constitute a relationship between equals; Nietzsche was usually the dominating partner, the superior who cannot bare his whole soul to his inferiors. Burckhardt, his older colleague at Basel, was, to be sure, his peer in many respects, but Burckhardt carefully preserved a benevolent distance from Nietzsche, fearing the latter to be a disturbing influence which had to be kept at bay if he were to maintain his treasured calm. He was probably right.

That leaves Rohde and Overbeck. In a letter of August 1866, Nietzsche wrote of the former to Gersdorff that he was "a very clever but obstinate and self-willed mind." That year, however, the two young men became intimate friends, and Nietzsche for some years wrote him letters of an intensity which today may raise suspicions in those who do not understand classical friendships among males. (Nietzsche was not a homosexual.) In Rohde, Nietzsche had found what he held to be a true friend, and he marveled at the fact. But, more against Nietzsche's will than Rohde's, the two men slowly and inevitably drifted apart. While Nietzsche was pursuing his special fate, Rohde made his peace with a more conventional career as an academician. Though his work on the Greeks was outstanding—his book, *Psyche*, published in 1894, retains its interest today—Rohde slowly became *contented*, and this was hardly to Nietzsche's taste. When Rohde became engaged in 1876, Nietzsche wished him well "with all the fullness of my heart," but there is no doubt that he felt vaguely betrayed. In 1881, Nietzsche wrote to Overbeck that he was disappointed by Rohde's "thoughtlessness as regards the *direction* of his life." Yet both men felt regret at their mutual estrangement, so that the final quarrel and break between them was postponed until 1887. Rohde can to some extent be accused of forsaking Nietzsche when the latter needed him most, but to some extent he can be excused because he evidently was simply not up to the intensity demanded by Nietzsche: it is not easy to have a genius for a friend.

And that leaves only Overbeck, who did manage to bear with Nietzsche to the dreadful end, and who was rewarded by the most remarkable letters Nietzsche ever wrote. Overbeck, a professor of theology at Basel (but not a believer), was, like Rohde, an academician in the best sense of the word; his work is unjustly neglected today. Though he could not follow Nietzsche in the latter's high flights of mind, he seems to have reconciled himself to his lesser gifts and achieved genuine devotion without envy toward Nietzsche. Overbeck, then, was Nietzsche's truest friend. It was mainly to Overbeck that Nietzsche confided the terrible impact on himself of the break with Lou, the various quarrels with Elizabeth, and his mother's saying he was a disgrace to his dead father. With Overbeck and his wife, Nietzsche could even more or less relax, and he could impose on Overbeck without too much ado.

Yet not even from Overbeck could Nietzsche obtain what he wanted most: relief from his special fate, which Overbeck shared as little as did Rohde. What makes these letters heartbreakingly poignant is Nietzsche's growing awareness, amidst his lavish praise of friendship, that he was not made for friendship, that his special fate was utter solitude. In January 1869, Nietzsche wrote to Rhode that he was "lonely because of a caprice of nature," as if he had been fashioned in some abnormal way, and as late as 1887 he could state, "I feel *condemned* to my solitude." Moreover, he would note wryly how few greetings reached him on various of his birthdays. But while he never quite ceased to bemoan his aloneness, he came slowly—especially during the 80's—to regard it as inevitable, to accept and thereby to understand it. Thus he could write to Overbeck in 1885 of his "inner isolation, from which the best will in the world could not now extract me," and in 1886 of his calm recognition that "among the living as among the dead, I have nobody with whom I have any affinity." In more ways than one Nietzsche's career can be understood as a journey into loneliness, during which he was sustained by the realization that loneliness is a clue to the human lot and that a lonely man has time to think.

V

JUST AS Nietzsche was usually alone, so was he almost always ill —or was he? A cursory reading of these letters is bound to create the impression that he was a hypochondriac. There seems to be no other word for a man who at different times could attribute the following causes to his ill health: the weather in Basel, contact with people, the northern sky, Wagner's nerve-shattering music, heredity, overwork, thinking, meteorological factors, writing, terrestrial and climatic disturbances, the absence of dry air, an inclination toward pity.

But it will not do simply to dismiss Nietzsche as a hypochondriac, for there is conclusive evidence—medical records and the testimony

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of those who knew him—that he really was, for most of his life, plagued by illness. During the Franco-Prussian war, in which Nietzsche served as a medical orderly, he became ill with dysentery and diphtheria; his eyesight steadily deteriorated throughout his life; he was constantly beset by stomach cramps which led to repeated vomiting and by headaches which incapacited him totally; and the final madness may well have been the result of a syphilitic infection contracted in his student days.

Given the objective reality of Nietzsche's manifold forms of illness, one is bound to admire his struggle against such adversity. He may, of course, have been exaggerating when he wrote to Gast in 1884 that "One good day in every ten—these are my statistics, the devil take them!" but there is no doubt that his whole life was informed by a depressing rhythm of recoveries and relapses. At times his pains were severe enough to make death almost a welcome thought, yet, half-blind and wracked by physical agonies, he kept on working and writing.

To deny that Nietzsche was a hypochondriac is not to deny that an aura of ambiguity surrounded his illnesses, which tended to be vague, hard to diagnose, and impossible to cure. One is surely entitled to speculate about his health in psychosomatic terms, if only because Nietzsche, whose whole philosophy denies any radical distinction between body and soul, did so himself. Nor can one deny that Nietzsche *was* a hypochondriac, if by that one means only that he was excessively preoccupied with his own health, and with all the problems of illness generally, including, of course, mental illness. Ultimately, however, this merely means that illness was a fundamental datum of Nietzsche's existence and that he therefore put it to use in seeking to understand human existence generally. The letters are full of reflections on the complicated relationship between his state of health and the writings produced under any given state. For example, it did not long escape Nietzsche that bad health is not incompatible with good spirits, that there is a pessimism born of well-being as well as an optimism born of sickness. And in his books, health and sickness are essential categories of thought. For what are Nietzsche's thoughts about decadence if not a diagnosis of the basic illness of the modern world? The doctrine of the will to power surely means, among other things, that even health can and must be willed, or, if it cannot, that the root cause is a sickness of the will. Even to go "beyond good and evil" means, in large part, to reinterpret goodness and evil in terms of the health and sickness of the self. For Nietzsche, illness, like solitude, was a piece of his destiny; it was there to be understood and finally even to be willed by affirming it.

VI

The more one examines such "constants" in Nietzsche's life as solitude and illness, the more one sees that their final meaning consists in their being nothing more, or nothing less, than grist for the thinker's mill. Similarly, behind every mask that Nietzsche wears, and beyond all his chameleon-like changes, there abides Nietzsche the thinker. One comes to his letters with the primitive question: what was Nietzsche really like? The only firm answer that emerges is the seemingly barren one: Nietzsche was a philosopher.

The answer is only seemingly barren. For example, it helps to account for the inevitability of Nietzsche's solitude: a genuine philosopher is unlikely to have any "colleagues" in his vicinity. It also casts a new light on a number of his remarks which one might otherwise dismiss cavalierly as megalomaniacal. No great philosopher was ever humble. It is true that many philosophers have dissembled their superiority, but there is a world of difference between Socratic irony and humility. The philosopher is forever philosophizing about philosophy, which means, among other things, that he is assessing the worth of his way of life, and he is forever realizing that compared with *his* way of life all others are lacking.

These letters show that even the young Nietzsche was aware of his special calling and its glory. In 1871, when he was in his twenties, he penned to Rohde a rhapsody to philosophical awareness, calling it "intellectual insomnia," and by 1874 he could write: ". . . I desire nothing more than to be enlightened about the whole highly complicated system of antagonisms which constitutes the 'modern world.'" (He already knew that true enlightenment about the "modern world" presupposed an understanding of the "ancient world" and that ultimately it entailed knowledge of "the world" simply.) One exaggerates only slightly when one conceives of Nietzsche as a man possessed by thinking, for whom the most urgent imperative was to think as profoundly, as radically, as possible.

The fact that these are the letters of a philosopher may also to a certain extent explain why on a superficial level they are somewhat less than fascinating. If even books are a dubious medium for philosophizing, what shall one say of letters? Moreover, many of these letters are for Nietzsche a momentary relief from the tensions of his task, a temporary descent from the strict demands of strict thinking. Which is not to say that they are totally uninformative about his intellectual preoccupations. They do include some hints about the meaning of the Doctrine of Eternal Return, a doctrine which he never developed "systematically," as well as some acute reflections on such diverse topics as optimism and ancient metrics. One could also use these letters to defend Nietzsche against the charge that he was a narrow German nationalist and an anti-Semite. But for this purpose the books alone suffice, and today, when a tendency is afoot to understand Nietzsche as basically a harmless fellow, a kind of liberal democrat with an engaging polemical zest, Nietzsche hardly needs to be defended against such charges.

VII

It is revealing to classify Nietzsche as a philosopher, but it is not revealing enough. It is necessary to

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see him as a philosopher, for he held at times that the "meaning of one's life consists in knowing" and he was capable of defining thinking as a "feast," but it is also insufficient. The insufficiency becomes apparent from the merest glance at his works, which are perhaps the most sustained possible questioning of the premises of philosophy as philosophy is traditionally understood. In other words, Nietzsche's differences from the class of men we call philosophers are almost as significant as his resemblances to them.

All philosophers seek the truth, and in this Nietzsche is no exception. What is exceptional about him is that his search was almost from the beginning accompanied by a suspicion that the truth is terrible, and that his persistence in the search brought him nothing so much as ever-increasing certainty that fundamental reality is abysmal.

The suspicion appears in a very early letter to Elizabeth, written when Nietzsche was only twenty. There he insists that one ought to look for "the truth, *even if it were to be frightening and ugly*" (italics added), and he is careful to distinguish the search for truth from the search for happiness. The *Selected Letters* also includes an autobiographical fragment of the twenty-four-year-old Nietzsche, in which he attributes to himself "a certain philosophical seriousness, which was never satisfied except when facing the naked truth and did not fear *hard and evil consequences* but was even partial to them" (italics added). And in 1885, after he had completed *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, that is to say when he had reached the height of his power as a philosopher, he writes to Overbeck: "My life now consists in wishing that everything may be different from the way in which I understand it and that someone may make my 'truths' incredible to me."

Philosophy means love of wisdom; it is an activity of the soul which implies that truth is lovable. But, as the above quotation shows, the truth was anything *but* lovable to Nietzsche, a fact which explains why "intellectual probity" occupied so lofty a place in his transvaluation of values. Intellectual probity is the virtue of the man who dares to face the terrible truth unflinchingly. Nietzsche, for whom courage is as high a virtue as wisdom, is the man who persists in trying to understand the world though the world is, when not hostile to man, utterly meaningless.

Now THIS admittedly does not distinguish Nietzsche from all other philosophers; it merely makes him a modern philosopher. It is, after all, characteristic of most of modern philosophy to view the world no longer as a cosmos in which man occupies a central—though not the highest—place, but as a chaos in which men are "strangers and afraid"—though they can master it. Nevertheless, once one has classified Nietzsche as a *modern* philosopher, one must add that he was the *most modern* of philosophers in order to have at least the beginning of an adequate description of him. *Nietzsche is the man who in his* mental journey carried the modern project to its utmost possible extreme and thereby made its ramifications frighteningly clear.

Indeed, he carried philosophy into a region where it must seemingly expose itself as a delusion and thus surrender its proud claim to be the highest human activity. For in a strange way the Nietzschean solution to the problem of the ugliness of truth seems to consist in the abolition of objective truth, in the teaching that truth is not something which can be discovered but something which must be created. In that case, philosophers have always deluded themselves when speaking of pure contemplation; philosophy is merely the most spiritualized form of the will to power; and Nietzsche is the final philosopher because he is the first philosopher in whom the will to power becomes aware of itself. Reasoning, then, becomes a species of willing, and willing need no longer recognize any limitations, for if nothing is true, everything is possible. The meaninglessness of the world is then not simply terrible, for man, the conqueror of nature and chance, can *give* it meaning.

VIII

To GIVE the world meaning—that is how Nietzsche came to see his task. It was, of course, a task the accomplishment of which called for more than a philosopher. In fact, it called for more than a mere man; it demanded, at the very least, a superman.

For those of us who are mere mortals and who continue to yearn for a meaning that is beyond human making, the reading of the letters Nietzsche wrote late in 1888 from Turin is an absolutely chilling experience, precisely because of the intimations they contain that Nietzsche now thinks of himself as transcending his own humanity. Let there be no mistake about it: Nietzsche is still a sane man in the year 1888, and the books he wrote during this period provide the most conclusive evidence on this point. Nevertheless, a new note appears in the letters. At first it may strike us as merely an unexpectedly cheerful note. *Nietzsche has regained his health* and has finally found a place in which he can live permanently. The homeless wandering from city to city has ceased and the dichotomy between his work and his happiness has been abolished. But as gaiety yields to exuberance, and exuberance to abandon, the note gradually and inexorably becomes ominous to our ears.

Nietzsche's final transvaluation of values begins with the transvaluation of his place of residence. Turin becomes the perfect city, where the weather is glorious, the food excellent, and the people admirable. Nietzsche no longer suffers from the cold; he can now eat anything without ill effect, and most important, he receives respect and exerts fascination wherever he goes. The waiters serve him special food; the faces of shopkeepers light up when he approaches; grape-vendors save the choicest grapes for him. After years of neglect, he now basks in the attention of mankind.

It is not only the right place for Nietzsche; it is the right time. All things happen in the right order for him, so that he can write to August Strindberg on December 7, 1888, that "there are no more co-

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incidences in my life." Around Christmas, he repeats this to Overbeck and adds: "I need only to think of somebody and a letter from him comes politely through the door. . . ." The will is now supreme; everything is possible. He is convinced that *Ecce Homo* will sell more copies than *Nana*. He knows he is "strong enough to break the history of mankind in two"; he knows that "in two months I shall be the foremost name on earth." He is more than a mere man; he has become a destiny.

* * *

EARLY IN January 1889, after he had gone mad, Nietzsche wrote a letter to Jakob Burckhardt. It is the last letter in the present volume, and it is the last letter Nietzsche ever wrote. It begins as follows: "Actually I would much rather be a Basel professor than God; but I have not ventured to carry my private egoism so far as to omit creating the world on this account."

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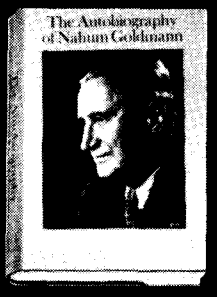

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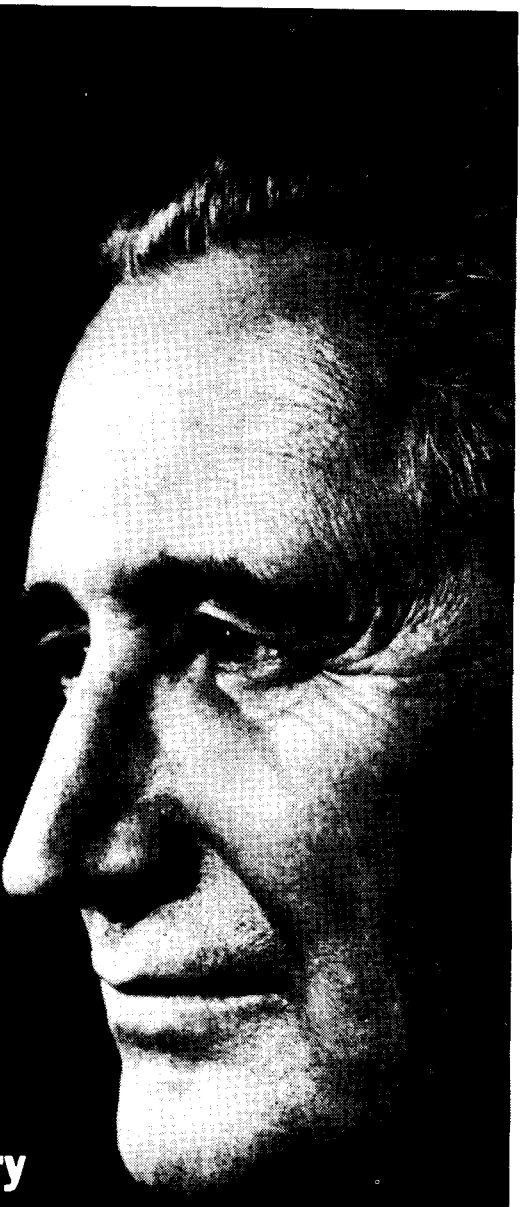

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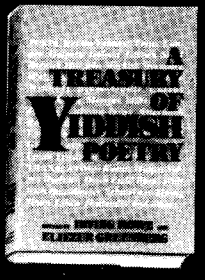

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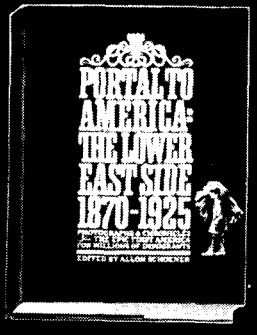

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Experience as Drama

AN UNFINISHED WOMAN. By LILLIAN HELLMAN. *Little-Brown. 280 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by DOROTHY RABINOWITZ

NOT THE LEAST important thing about a memoir is who has written it. Some lives are just more naturally transformed into material for drama than are others; some are dramatic in the merest recording of facts. While nothing of the drama of Miss Hellman's memoir has to do with mere recording—her narrative style is absolutely compelling—one is directed to note the intrinsic interest of the facts: she has written twelve plays (a matter she passes over lightly in the memoir, a throwaway in favor of the personal); her friends are interesting, if not notorious (Dorothy Parker, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Eisenstein, Dashiell Hammett). She reports from two wars: she is in Spain, wandering around in the bombardments of Valencia and Madrid; toward the end of World War II, on a cultural mission to Moscow, she ends up (the only journalist permitted) at the Russian front, in the bunkers with General Chernov's White Russian Divisions as they prepare to move on to the liberation of Poland. She has seen Maidanek newly liberated, and she is present at the interrogation of the first SS officer to desert from the German army. These are scenes built on the emotional facts of our recent history. Maidanek is short, retching, dreamlike. The interrogation of the SS by the Russians is built, unutterably tense in the exchange of plain information which is not style, but words and movements torn flat from the diary of a war whose plainest day could not be ordinary.

One is tempted to note the intrinsic drama of Miss Hellman's experience as a means of explaining the distinguished nature of this memoir. There is history here, an intimate recording of facts significant beyond the personal. This is not to say that the personal, which accounts for so much of Miss Hellman's material, is not in itself deeply interesting; it is that the combination of both is rarely ever found in the record of an ordinary life, as we know ordinary. I want to make this distinction to offer some standard for judging a work of this kind. Teaching in a university some years ago, I remember giving my students an assignment to write about an experience that mattered, one they wanted to tell about. One, an Israeli exchange student, wrote, in laconic key, the details of his parachute drop during the Sinai invasion—his first day of combat. Another wrote about learning to drive a car and the day he passed his driver's test. One is asked to believe in these times of psychological inflation that the profounder experience of the two is now defined by the quality of the sensibility writing; one experience is as good as another. Perhaps, but I have not found it so. I knew even then, as Miss Hellman might say, that life was unfair to people who needed grades. Experience mattered, and it was not altogether an accident of history and geography that determined who was where.

Life has not been unfair to Miss Hellman that way. The quality of her experience has been extraordinary and that is no accident. It is an inevitability of spirit, that which creates experience. It is that which creates her language, too. Her speech is not poetic; it is stark and abrupt, but the force of its observation makes this conscientiously plain-speaking sensibility move as it does. Her lines on Dashiell Hammett:

> I know as little about the nature of romantic love as I knew when I was eighteen, but I do know about the deep pleasure of continuing interest, the excitement of wanting to know what somebody else thinks, will do, will not do, the tricks played and unplayed, the short cord that the years make into rope and, in my case, is there, hanging loose, . . .

All of her lines on Hammett, virtually, have the vital, funny cutting edge of recall. But it is more than style: it is the deepest of feeling, coming plain and meant to be that, enlarged nonetheless by its clarity and infectious in its precision.

AN UNFINISHED WOMAN is a record of personal discovery, most of which does not approach the fine emotional nerve of Miss Hellman's conclusions on Hammett. The record takes up her childhood, girlhood, and womanhood. Some of the details are ordinary, some are not: the feel of all of it is intensity bordering on the exorbitant. That is because Miss Hellman's dramaturgical instincts permit no conversation, no word, no twitch of a face, no walk across a room which does not create a scene. No silence is permitted which does not make a speech, no gesture which does not add to the creation; the scenes come with a striking power that for me, at least, never was there in Miss Hellman's plays. Thus: in Valencia, food is scarce. Miss Hellman shares a hotel dining table with a German couple and an English doctor who has come to supervise medical supplies sent by British organizations. The diary records that Miss Hellman, about to leave for Barcelona, brings her own provisions to the table:

> Tonight I took the peaches, two cans of anchovies, a box of crackers to the dinner table. I asked the handshaking German to open them, but he put his hands in his lap and smiled. I passed them to the young man from the Press Office, but he shook his head.

DOROTHY RABINOWITZ, *who contributed "Power in the Academy" to our June number, is currently at work on a book about old age in America.*

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No one will take anything. The doctor instructs her that they are shy about taking other people's food. They are persuaded, finally, when they are told that this is a farewell party they must share.

> I liked him very much as he rose and served each person one anchovy and a cracker. Everybody ate very slowly, and there was no talk. I served the peaches and they stared at their plates . . . . There were still a few anchovies. . . . There wasn't any for the doctor or for me. . . . The German immediately put his anchovy on my plate and the German lady leaned over to give hers to the doctor.

Both the doctor and Miss Hellman refuse their share, asserting that they dislike anchovies.

> . . . when the oil of the can was passed around, I heard the German lady make a sound of pleasure. I didn't want a peach, but there was such disbelief when I said so that I ate part of one. . . . At the door, I turned to speak to somebody and saw that the German lady was wrapping my half peach in a piece of paper. She handed it to her husband. He shook his head and gave it back and she gave it back to him and this time he took it and kissed the hand that gave it to him. The doctor had waited at the door for me and had seen what I had seen. In the hall, he said, "My God. Hunger is awful."

WHEN EVENTS are not of themselves dramatic, Miss Hellman's disposition intercedes to make them so. A disposition like hers is best described in her own terms. Throughout *An Unfinished Woman,* she is concerned with her early intimations of—quaint but good word yet—her nature. Those intimations are the creatures that flit through the memoir, remembering her to herself. She had always known that she was something, fit or not fit for this or that, so that no experience, as recorded, comes quite unapprehended. No experience, no fact of the self, comes raw with adult discovery—it has all been prepared for long ago, whatever the self does. She writes, for instance, of trying to decide whether or not to accept the dangerous, if enviable, invitation proffered by General Chernov, to move with his division to the liberation of Warsaw:

> . . . I will not sleep tonight, whatever I decide . . . and after that will come, as it always has, a hatred for the side of me that either falls into action or avoids it . . . giving in and over to people or places. . . . But it was not like that.

In the end, she thanks the General and refuses, "not in fear for my life, but in fear of my nature. . . ." One could have wished for a less historic moment for that knowledge. But the pattern of recognition is the triumph of the memoir over life, a triumph not easy to avoid if one wants to (and one should want to). There is just too much here of, "I-had-found-very-early" and I-had-always-known-that" and "knowing-even-then, I-think" and that sort of imposed monotony of self-knowledge which is the memoir's landscaping. For life, it would seem unbearable.

THERE IS another difficulty, too—of a tone so composed around the self and its two units of feeling (irritability and love) that it makes no distinctions among experiences or among objects. Thus, during the march on Washington, she can grow irritated with Martin Luther King, impatient with his dream, as she says, because *he* reminds her of too many Southern preachers of her childhood. If she cannot love him, she must be irritated with him: he has that place assigned by childhood memory and there is nothing to be said beyond that—that, and the fact that he is a kind man, as she says—and she wanders off to look for something to eat. It is that kind of sensibility: one is either here or there, right or not, irritating or loved.

There are people who confuse irritability with intellect, and I suspect Miss Hellman may be one of them. She admired in Hammett his refined hauteur, his willingness to snub people who were wrong or who bored him. The charm of it is clear: "He took a strong and lasting dislike to a man who insisted mackerel were related to herring. . . ." It is a quality which charmed Miss Hellman, one which is indeed charming in Ham-

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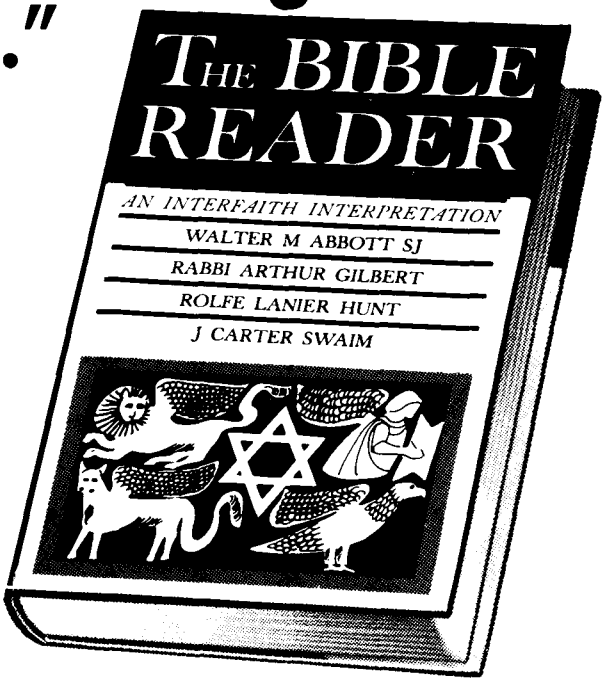
TIME, October 3, 1969



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mett as he is rendered throughout, a fact-loving irritable intellect who knew how to be rude to people as Miss Hellman did not. But there is often a confusion between irritability and mind, and the confusion of irritability with anything but what it is, has its dangers. And Miss Hellman can assume an irascibility of her own, which too often takes the place of all the other emotions one may have about things one does not happen to love. There are many things Miss Hellman does not love, and she is merely, and monotonously, irritable about all of them.

BUT THERE IS nothing finally monotonous about *An Unfinished Woman*, if only because Miss Hellman is so faithfully enigmatic in her observation when she might merely have been interesting. Apparently, a nature like Miss Hellman's is bent on the enigmatic on all occasions, even while it is explaining things. The more she explains, irascibly insistent on clearing things up, opening psychic doors, the more enigma sidles through, going comfortably home to its own true voice and bringing all its friends too. That is the true voice of the book. Time and again, we are left with reportage on awkward encounters, moments of genuine, high drama, interred with: "but we were never to speak of that again." During one of their arguments, Hammett slowly grinds a burning cigarette into his cheek. They never speak of that again. Miss Hellman explains, in her fashion, but it is the silence which lasts.

Miss Hellman nails her dramatic scenes so often with that silence that it becomes a leitmotif, a reassuring thud that persuades the reader that no more ever happened, which means everything. No one misses anything, the event is totally given. That is Miss Hellman, the dramatist, who works superbly well at this. The other result of that frequent interment, "we were never to speak of that again" and all its variations, is the suggestion of enormous psychic controls developed around all the relationships described. And it is the constant suggestion of putting things away between people, the small, shared secrets, that render the slightest relationships successfully intimate. A little girl in a squirrel coat and a woman in an English nanny costume appear briefly and disappear down the rubble of a Russian street. A young Captain K. arrives for the purpose of visiting Miss Hellman. While she waits, he reads a magazine in her sitting room before uttering a word. No one of these relationships is uninteresting, but it is not a matter of dramatistic skill alone which makes them move. It is Miss Hellman's idiosyncratic sympathies. She likes these people, and it is her sympathies which compel attention to the last detail of her subject. "I like people who refuse to speak until they are ready to speak," she directs us to Captain K.

Compelling also is the insistence of her graphic style: she is nine; there is a heavy fig tree in which she whiles away truant afternoons. She says she was convinced the tree missed her in her absence. One obediently wishes to understand exactly where the tree was in relation to the corner of the house. That is the kind of description of which Miss Hellman is capable at her best: to make one insist on seeing what she has seen, physically, geographically, anatomically—the twitch on which side of the face?—and the insistence is at her direction. It comes from her deep sympathy for the thing observed; that, or her utter distaste, all in that tone of enigma-honesty, which is a triumph of persistence.

Conspiracy & Due Process

THE TRIAL OF DR. SPOCK. By JESSICA MITFORD. *Knopf. 266 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by LEON FRIEDMAN

IN RETROSPECT—after, that is, the Chicago explosion of 1968, after campus upheavals and ghetto convulsions—the acts which led to the trial and conviction of Dr.

LEON FRIEDMAN'S *book on civil disobedience,* The Wise Minority, *will be published by Dial in the spring of 1970. Mr. Friedman practices law in New York City.*

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Benjamin Spock and his fellow "conspirators" by a Boston Federal District Court, in June of 1968, appear rather tame. One may grant the importance of the principles involved and the sincerity and personal heroism of the defendants; still, one looks back to that time (1967) when their acts were committed as a kind of age of innocence, when radical action took the form of leading (peaceful) demonstrations protesting the Vietnam war, or issuing precisely-worded manifestos in support of draft resistance—all very gentlemanlike, low-keyed, soft-spoken. No spilling of cow's blood on draft files; no strong-arming of bewildered professors. Even Miss Mitford admits as much: "The events around which the trial revolved . . . seemed ancient history. . . . By the time of the trial, the Boston courtroom seemed a backwater." Moreover, subsequent developments have removed the sting from the case altogether. On July 11, 1969 the Federal Court of Appeals in Boston reversed the convictions of Dr. Spock and Harvard graduate student Michael Ferber for conspiring to interfere with the draft law and ordered a new trial for two other defendants, Rev. William Sloane Coffin of Yale and novelist Mitchell Goodman. (The fifth defendant, Marcus Raskin, had been acquitted in the original trial.) In August, the government announced it would not appeal the decisions with regard to Spock and Ferber; and any new retrial of Goodman and Coffin seems unlikely. So—what was *l'affaire* Spock, Coffin, et al. all about? What indeed ever prompted the government to prosecute in the first place?

Miss Mitford, whose research here seems every bit as careful and provocative as in her previous book, *The American Way of Death,* offers the following explanation: Shortly after the October 1967 march on the Pentagon, General Lewis Hershey sent a directive to draft boards across the country advising them to reclassify as 1-A all registrants who took part in "illegal demonstrations" and to induct them immediately. University presidents, civil-liberties groups, even Abe Fortas took loud and public objection to the Hershey order, and the Justice Department then began to look for "a graceful way" to have the new directive revoked. As a *quid pro quo,* Attorney General Ramsey Clark agreed to set up a special prosecution unit to speed up indictments of draft resisters and those who counseled, aided, or abetted them, to wit, the older group of intellectuals leading the anti-war demonstrations. Hershey, a political pro with enormous influence in Congress, never even pretended to fill his part of the bargain and never rescinded his directive. (A federal court in the District of Columbia recently declared it illegal.) But Clark immediately ordered his people to bring indictments against the Spock group.

How to explain this shabby episode? Perhaps it can be attributed to the general deterioration that affected even the best members of the Johnson administration in its waning days. Clark must certainly be considered one of the most liberal Attorneys General of this century; yet, as a gesture to the Right and in an effort to gain concessions, he was willing to initiate one of the more questionable civil-liberties cases of our time. But justice, of a sort, was served, too, and Clark received no *quid* for his *quo.* The right wing continued to attack him for his "softness" on crime and Hershey—up until his recent forced retirement at least—continued to run the Selective Service system in his usual magisterial way. One gratifying postscript: Clark evidently learned his lesson from this experience and refused to bring any indictments against the Chicago demonstrators. It was up to the Nixon administration, and particularly John Mitchell, to start *that* ball rolling.

Miss Mitford's account of the trial belongs in that small and select company of lay books about the law (Anthony Lewis's *Gideon's Trumpet* is another example) which illuminate more about the legal process than the learned tomes of judges and lawyers. For the present work she interviewed all the defendants, their relatives and friends, every lawyer involved,

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the Justice Department prosecutors, General Hershey, and three of the jurors who heard the case. She attended every court proceeding, sitting in a special chair by the courtroom door reserved for her by considerate U.S. marshals, writing everything down in her notebook, buttonholing lawyers during recess. All this industry has been put to good use. Miss Mitford, as everybody knows, is a witty writer, and her descriptions of the *dramatis personae* are particularly entertaining. She sizes up, with just the right phrases, Dr. Spock's geniality, Rev. Coffin's bounce, Michael Ferber's idealism, old Judge Ford's harrumphing. And what little overt drama there was in that long, repetitious five-week trial—the verbal sparring between the defendants and prosecutor John Wall, the judge's openly expressed hostility—is brilliantly distilled.

BUT THE book, of course, deals in more than clever description. It seeks to come to grips with what was, after all, the *legal* heart of the trial, the tricky issue of conspiracy. For the five defendants were accused of conspiring to counsel registrants under the draft law to evade service and to refuse to keep their draft cards in their possession, and generally to interfere with the administration of the draft. The acts which formed the basis of the prosecution included the preparation and signing of a manifesto protesting the Vietnam war ("A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority"); the holding of press conferences to publicize opposition to American policy; participation in anti-war demonstrations; and presence at rallies where draft cards were turned in. The defendants were not accused of any substantive crime—actually counseling young men not to register or to be inducted—but of *conspiring* to do so. Thus under traditional legal rules regarding conspiracy, the government could introduce a wide range of evidence, such as statements by alleged co-conspirators, which would otherwise not be admissible; and the prosecution did not have to show that the defendants succeeded in persuading a single young man to turn in his draft card.

ז ו

1. **ZAYEN** stands for *Zisser* **SWEETER...** and sweeter is what lots of women say Jack Frost sugar is.

2. **VAV** stands for *Vee* **HOW...** How can this be so? Just try it and see.

מ פ

3. **MEM** stands for *Merkivirdik* **REMARKABLE...** that's what you'll think Jack Frost Sugar is.

4. **FEH** stands for *Farvos* **WHY...** Why is Jack Frost Sugar so remarkable?

ד JF

5. **DALET** stands for *Derfar* **BECAUSE...** Because, as they say, Jack Frost Sugar tastes sweeter.

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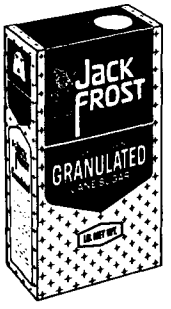
CERTIFIED  KOSHER

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The gravamen of the crime of conspiracy is an *agreement* to perform an illegal act, whether subsequently accomplished or not, and agreement can be proved by demonstrating parallel conduct toward an illegal goal. Thus the government tried to show that the defendants encouraged each other in voicing opposition to the war and supporting draft resisters. Even applauding their friends' remarks at public rallies became evidence of an illegal conspiracy. Miss Mitford comments: "At the Spock trial, the government's message came over loud and clear: You are not as free as you think you are. Yes, of course you may sign a peace petition, you may have your name on a newspaper advertisement supporting draft resisters. . . . However, if you do these things, you will be 'kept under surveillance by the FBI'. . . and should it happen to suit the government's purpose, you will then be prosecuted, and the petition, the advertisement, the mass meeting, and your applause will be solemnly paraded before the jury as evidence against you." Miss Mitford is not stretching a point. In March 1969, eight of the leaders of the Chicago demonstrations were indicted for conspiring to violate the anti-riot provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. The government charged that "it was a part of said conspiracy that . . . the defendants . . . would organize and attend various meetings, would publish and cause to be published articles, and would make and cause to be made long distance telephone calls for the purpose of encouraging persons to come to Chicago . . . to participate in massive demonstrations. . . ." Not since the worst days of the Palmer raids and the wholesale indictment of opponents to World War I has such activity been the basis of a federal prosecution.

An appalling state of affairs. And yet . . . though one's liberal sympathies tend automatically to incline toward Miss Mitford's reading of the trial, there is, ultimately, a shade of naiveté about her analysis. Like many others, she was offended by the use of a conspiracy charge against the defendants—the vagueness of the proof and the wide lati-

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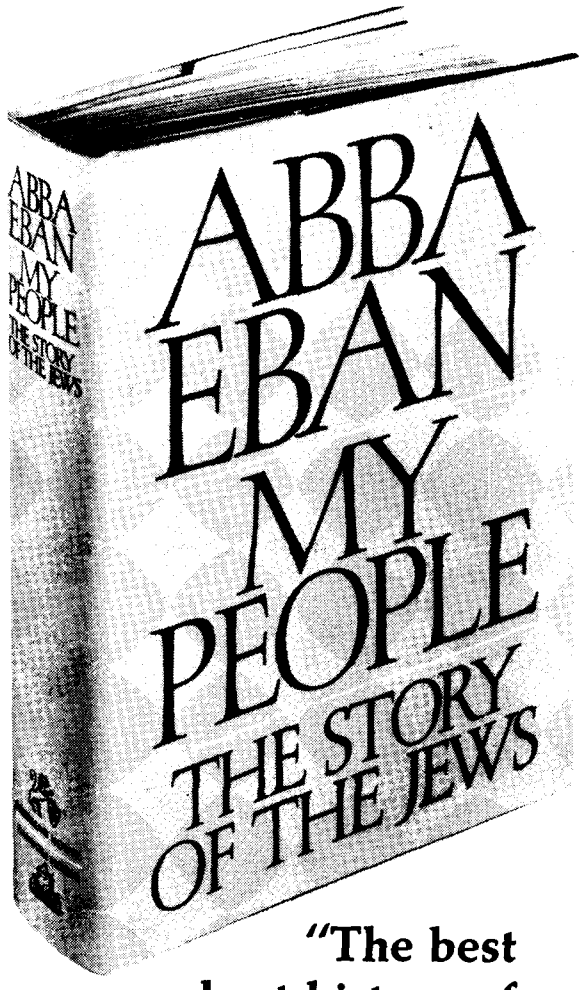

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tude given the prosecution shocked her—but she fails to see the obverse side of the coin. Shortly after Daniel Lang's article on the trial appeared in the *New Yorker*—it also attacked the conspiracy theory—I had occasion to talk to a Justice Department official in charge of draft cases. "What's the matter with these people?" he said. "They never complain when we indict Ku Klux Klan people for conspiracy under the Civil Rights Act." So again it is the old matter of whose ox has been gored, and while Miss Mitford's sympathies are as valid as yours and mine, one would have hoped that, good as she is, she might have been better in guiding us through the conspiracy thicket. (In her defense, one might note that the use of a conspiracy charge in political trials, where overt acts may be expressions of free speech, raises problems of special difficulty for expert and informed layman alike.)

MISS MITFORD, furthermore, sees the particular difficulties of the Spock trial as endemic to all political trials—and they are not. In her view, due process is impossible when the government tries to silence its opponents in court. The prosecution, the judge, the jury, the public itself become deaf to the demands of fairness when basic governmental policies are brought before the courts, and justice yields to the requirements of politics. Miss Mitford writes: "... does not the demand for fair trial and due process in political cases simply perpetuate the myth—should not the demand rather be, in the public interest, an *end* to political trials?" But she undercuts her own case when she tells us that even the conservative Boston jury that heard the Spock case showed some sympathy for the defendants and their politics. The acquittal of Raskin, she writes, may have been the result of "a tacit desire of the jury to assert its independence, to vote, in some token way, its conscience." Perhaps, she suggests, that spark could be "fanned into a flame" if the jury were given greater leeway to acquit no matter how the judge charged or the law required. Thus she seems to conclude that the key problem of a political trial relates

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only to the judge's charge. But this is hardly sufficient reason for condemning all such proceedings: juries who feel strongly enough about a case will ignore whatever the judge tells them. And, more important, political trials are not always initiated by the government. Often political opponents or oppressed minorities precipitate judicial tests of a governmental policy.

DR. SPOCK and his fellow defendants tried to bring the political issues of the Vietnam war and the draft before the courts and virtually demanded that the government indict them so that a test case on these points might be heard. But the presiding judge, eighty-five-year-old Francis Ford, foiled that attempt and refused to deal with those larger matters. The court only passed on the defendants' *right* to voice their opposition to the war; the sole issue was whether their demonstrations and manifestoes went beyond the permissible limits of free speech. And finally, on appeal, they won the only case that the government would allow them.

By almost any standard the defendants' final victory was significant. Despite the qualifications made by the appeals court, the decision seriously restricts the government in trying to suppress dissent against the war. It is a distinct barrier to the Chicago indictments. Whatever temporary advantage the government gained by bringing the cases originally, whatever chilling effect the indictments may have first brought about, have been more than offset by the appellate decision.

In any political trial the government may find itself on the losing end, and the new legal rules established can open up important avenues for the opposition. The trial of John Lilburne in 1649 established the right against self-incrimination in common-law jurisdictions. John Wilkes's successful defense of his right to a seat in Parliament was a milestone of political freedom. The writs of assistance cases in the American colonies crystallized American opposition to British rule. The Test Oath cases after the Civil War, the Jehovah's Witnesses cases in the

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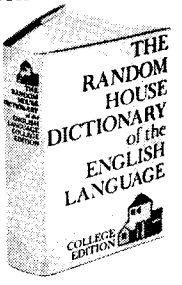

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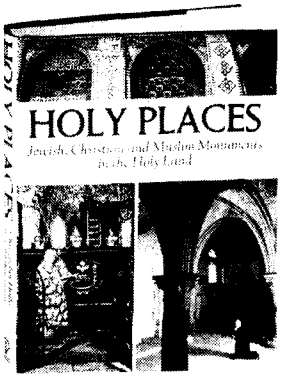

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1930's and 1940's, and the sit-in cases of the 1960's were all political trials instigated by minorities challenging a governmental policy of repression. In each instance the defendants won. The Spock trial does not belong to that variety of cases (Sacco-Vanzetti, Alger Hiss, the Rosenbergs) where defendants are accused of non-political crimes and convicted because of the political climate of the times. The Spock victory fits into an older tradition: that in which the courts, the most undemocratic branch of the government, succeed in keeping the democratic channels open.

Revisionism

THE POLITICS OF WAR: THE WORLD AND UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY, 1943-1945. By GABRIEL KOLKO. *Random House. 685 pp. $12.95.*

EMPIRE AND REVOLUTION: A RADICAL INTERPRETATION OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY. By DAVID HOROWITZ. *Random House. 274 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by
WILSON CAREY MCWILLIAMS

THE "OFFICIAL" history of the cold war, misleading in fact and disastrous in impact, has long been in need of revision, and most of us who still have some memory of the end of the war and the beginnings of the postwar world have always known as much. "Revising" history, however, is a perilous business; even in conditions far preferable to those of *1984*, there is always a danger that revision will result only in a cheap negation of orthodoxy, that it will be based on selected evidence, extensive—and dubious—"interpretation," and if all else fails, outright invention of data.

Gabriel Kolko's *The Politics of War* is likely to be a landmark because it so nearly avoids all those perils. It is, in fact, the first genuine work of scholarship in the new wave of revisionism. It is dou-

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bly welcome because books like David Horowitz's *Empire and Revolution* are still around and likely to be for some time; it is, after all, easier to produce a book without research or thought than with them. The two works share a common thesis: that World War II was merely an interruption of an international civil war which began in 1917, basically between Left and Right, but incidentally —since 1945 (or earlier) —between the superpowers and the non-Western world. Despite that basic agreement, the books could not be more different in quality.

Kolko's discussion of the decision to drop the atom bomb, for example, is thorough and perceptive, while Horowitz, by contrast, contents himself with repeating the legend invented by Gar Alperovitz that the United States used the bomb with the primary aim of affecting postwar diplomacy. According to Kolko, the United States did not expect the bomb to surprise or overawe the Soviet Union, or even Japan. In fact, he concludes that the United States could easily have defeated Japan, then fumblingly in the process of attempting surrender, without the help either of the bomb or of the Soviet Union. This conclusion, however, casts some doubt on Kolko's own basic assumption that, rather than the brilliance or bungling of men, there is at least an unconscious logic which accounts for policy. The entire burden of his book might easily suggest the opposite, for over and over the evidence leads to the conclusion that *all* parties greatly underestimated the radical undermining of the pre-war system, acting as they did on assumptions about the postwar world drawn from the immediate but irrelevant past. (Mao, apparently, was as guilty of this as Stalin, Hull, or Roosevelt.)

INDEED, KOLKO'S quest for logical explanations may overlook the most obvious possibility, that the scale and rate of change in the modern world have so outrun human capacities and imaginations as to become ruling forces *irrespective* of the intentions and plans of states and men. Occasionally Kol-

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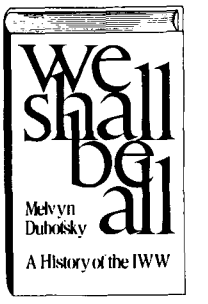
A History of the Industrial Workers of the World

by Melvyn Dubofsky



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ko falls into a kind of rationalism which can attach great importance, for instance, to the "precedent" set by the Allies in excluding the Soviet Union from any important role in the reorganization of Italy. Doubtless, the USSR was happy for the legal argument this action provided her in exercising her own unilateral will in Eastern Europe, but the precedent was excuse and no more; as Kolko indicates, when the United States later offered the Soviet Union a role in supervising Italian and Greek elections, it was refused precisely because the Americans wished to tie such a role to a reciprocal supervision of Eastern European voting. And that—theories of "democracy" aside—the Soviet Union had no intention of permitting, in 1943 or in 1946.

Both Horowitz and Kolko leave themselves open to the charge that they do not understand the nature of power in the contemporary world or the real forces that shape it. Horowitz intones the old litany that the "problems of economic and political stagnation" in the Third World "can be traced to penetration by the advanced powers"—as if, as Marx would have told him, such stagnation did not exist before. Third-world nations are not, as Horowitz would have it, poor because they are exploited; they are exploitable because they are poor. In fact, time and again Horowitz gives the game away. Thus, he argues that even 51 per cent control of a foreign corporation is inadequate, because "the technological and economic superiority of the metropolitan-based corporation still insures their effective control." This is probably true, but it only reflects the fact of Third-World weakness, of a dependence that is necessary whatever its consequences for the state involved.

True enough, capitalist corporations take more out of a state than they put into it. Yet non-Western governments generally seek industrial investment (whatever they think about extractive industries) because it provides aid now for a price in the future, and the poor must and will pay that price. Moreover, foreign investment has its own intrinsic advantages, as Horowitz ought to know; writing of the Soviet Union in the 20's, he declares that "the less external capital there was available . . . to expand the industrial sectors and induce the peasants to yield up their surplus, the more the peasants would have to be squeezed. . . ." Since most new states, in an age of insurrection, are wise to eschew the "squeezing" of peasants—whatever they might think of Stalinism as a political system—the need for external capital, from any source and even at great price, is inescapable. It hardly matters if the external aid comes from a foreign government (in which case exploitation is likely to be more political than economic) rather than from private industry. Exploitative possibilities are independent of the nature of regimes; they are written into the impoverished condition of Third-World states. Resentment is part of that condition, for its name is indignity, and with resentment comes resistance; none of this, however, changes the condition as such.

HOROWITZ SPEAKS of imperialism as "capitalism which has burst the boundaries of the nation state" and of the "expansion" which (following William Appleman Williams) he sees as a theme of American history. Certainly, capitalism does transcend state boundaries, but *so does the modern world.* Socialist systems which have "burst" those boundaries are imperialistic too; expansion is not the product of a particular system, it is inherent in the dynamic which the modern world set in motion when it accepted the conquest of nature and the limitless expansion of human power as the law of its life. And there are no signs that it has discarded the creed—or that the "Third World "resents anything but its exclusion from the benefits which result. Kolko is a valuable corrective here, commenting on the "expansionism" which may be "inferred" from Bolshevism—but here, too, what is at issue is not Bolshevism as a doctrine except in relation to its commitment to modernization. We live in an age of imperial units which make states obsolete; they also make men feel insignificant, and hence men cling to the nation, or the state, and if those break down, to still smaller units.

Discussing the end of World War II, Kolko writes that "unless Italy was prepared to go Left," she would have had to turn to the United States for aid. The probable fact is that she would have had to in any case; the Left (read, the Soviet Union) provided no alternative. In the same sense, the Czechs did, as Kolko suggests, desire "neutrality," but they were eager for American assistance which, to the Soviet Union, smacked of hostile penetration; hence the events of 1947. What happened in Italy, I suspect, provides rather an example of Soviet "moderation" in Western Europe which Kolko ignores. Well aware of its own limited resources, the Soviet Union was hardly eager to saddle itself with responsibility for Western Europe. Penurious Communist regimes would not be a source of strength; indeed, they might create hostile counterpressures. Far better, from a Soviet viewpoint, to take advantage of the inevitable failures of non-Communist regimes.

KOLKO'S ANALYSIS, however, seldom ignores such elements of power, although it is to be faulted on a number of points of detail and interpretation. For example, Kolko accepts the Soviet view that the Allies were engaged in a "cynical" act of "temporization" when they delayed the Second Front, and he rejects the reason offered by the Allies that their delay was based on purely military calculations. But Kolko also accepts the Soviet argument that their own failure to liberate Warsaw by supporting the uprising of General Tadeo Bor's underground Home Army was traceable to military considerations, even though the Home Army held out for two full months while Soviet troops were within easy reach of Warsaw. (Kolko may have a bad conscience on this point; Bor's rising, he asserts, was pointless because the Russians "could merely have thrown his exhausted forces out"—probably true but a commentary on Soviet aims nonetheless.) In the same way, he reads sinister meaning into the Al-

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lied civil-affairs directive to retain "local laws, customs, and institutions of government" though, for military reasons, such a policy is clearly indicated as the most effective means of ordering rear areas. It does not seem to occur to Kolko that the same military considerations—let alone diplomatic and propaganda aims—might account for the often repeated, and as often violated, Soviet disclaimer of any intent to disturb the "social system" of occupied states. Finally, a problem of fact: if Roosevelt "made no secret that Byrnes was his first choice" for the Vice-Presidency in 1944, it was hardly evident to party leaders at the Democratic convention in that year.

THESE, HOWEVER, are at most questions for debate. If Kolko's book has a serious fault, it lies in his neglect of the impact of what officials believed American opinion was on the policies they formed. Certainly, their assessment of domestic opinion had much to do with their half-support of the lunatic recalcitrance of the London Poles on the question of the Curzon line. Equally, it accounts for the extreme strength of Arthur Vandenberg's position as an erstwhile leader of isolationism. There is another dimension here. The memoirs that Kolko cites were written in the high days of the cold war and McCarthyism, and the memories of statesmen were, obviously, sharper when it came to their "anti-Communist" attitudes. Real though they may have been, those attitudes may not tell nearly the whole story; as Kolko makes clear, someone like Cordell Hull was more concerned with his archaic vision of free trade than with anything so up-to-date as the Soviet Union.

There is, however, a justification even in the neglect of the non-rational, the stupid and bumbling, and the domestic calculus of politicians. If overlooking or slighting these things results in neglecting the trees for the forest, it also makes the forest perceptible, if fuzzy at the edges. It allows Kolko above all to present the world as it is, a single polity in military and economic terms, struggling with its political fragmentation and ideological conflict, no longer a world of states concerned with "interests" in the old sense. It is a world in which the facts of life are at war with some of the deepest needs of men, where order is at odds with dignity and peace with justice. Since men need, and will insist on, all of these, the picture is a grim one; knowing exactly how grim it is, however, is prerequisite to any hope at all. For making that much patently clear, we owe Kolko a considerable debt.

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Myth

THE FLIGHT OF THE WILD GANDER. By JOSEPH CAMPBELL. *Viking. 240 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ACKERMAN

IN AN essay in 1953 in *Partisan Review* called "The Myth and the Powerhouse," Philip Rahv accused certain critics and philosophers then writing about myth of trying to escape from history by bootlegging religion, and hence of being covert conservative apologists. Rahv was writing out of an understandable irritation with the retreat from the Left and the concomitant religiosity that accompanied the "failure of nerve" in the late 40's and early 50's, and his charges were largely justified twenty years ago. (Were he to write such an essay in the changed political climate of today, he might well direct himself to the depraved uses of mythology, mysticism, and orientalia in pop culture, abetted by people smart enough to know better.)

In any case, Rahv's charges underline the necessarily problematic nature of all writing on myth for a liberal, secular audience. An automatic and often violent prejudice among intellectuals against everything that smacks of religion or mysticism can make otherwise subtle and sophisticated minds begin to razz and heckle when they detect in anyone else the least sign of interest in religion ("You don't mean you take that stuff seriously?"). Because religion, as they implicitly assume, is nothing more than an outworn superstition having no connection with reality, to write about it is to participate either in self-delusion or in fraud. On the Left, this prejudice—combined with the tendency to ideologize cultural phenomena—damns all such writing as crypto-conservative. Since from this viewpoint myth is thought of as interchangeable with religion, theology, and mysticism, books on myth are assumed to be a waste of time. But adjurations to be tough- rather than tender-minded fail to deal with the complexity of human reality of which myth is a part. Myth was, is, and will be, and there is more to it than the conservative politics of some who have written about it.

But even for those who do not experience, or who can surmount, the ideological reaction against myth, and especially for those anthropologists, psychoanalysts, folklorists, classicists, philosophers, theologians, and literary critics for whom myth is a serious matter, there are real problems within the field itself. First of all, there is still disagreement over the basic questions of the origins, nature, and meaning of myth, and little sign that anyone is capable of reconciling the numerous opposing views on each of these questions to formulate a general theory of mythology. The problem of definitions is complicated by the absence of a common language in which to discuss myth. The social sciences, as they have come to autonomy, have contributed new ways of understanding the subject which have only increased the confusion that had been developing over the centuries.

SOME OF THE main disagreements: Is myth best understood as the characteristic production of an early stage in human mental evolution, or is myth in fact an enduring mode of mental functioning, never to be outgrown? Are mythical narratives distorted accounts of historical events; are they attempts on the part of "savage philosophers" to explain natural phenomena; or are they the verbal accompaniments to disused rituals? And why are there such striking recurrences of themes and plot motifs in the worldwide distribution of myths and folktales? Is it because the human mind is everywhere the same, so that it invents similar stories, irrespective of time or place? Or are the repetitions the result of cultural diffusion from some central source?

Despite the absence of firm answers to these questions, writers at least since the Renaissance have attempted global surveys of the subject. The most famous of these conspectuses is of course Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough.* In our generation the mythographer who has had the

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fullest command of the huge scholarly literature, the analytic ability, the lucid prose, and the needed staying power has been Joseph Campbell, author of the monumental tetralogy, *The Masks of God* (1959-68).

The differences between Frazer and Campbell are noteworthy. Frazer blithely thought himself to be vastly superior to the "savage" with whose feeble efforts at ratiocination he believed himself to be dealing. With his sublime 19th-century rationalist's faith, he believed that he could understand everything there was to know about the myths which he collected. Campbell, though the beneficiary of an additional half-century of field anthropology and a modern sense of the complexities of primitive social organization, writes always with a feel for the ineradicable mystery of myth.

But Campbell truly surpasses his renowned predecessor in the area of psychology. Campbell's approach is psychoanalytic, as befits material now acknowledged to be inextricably bound up with our deepest instinctual life. His main authorities are Jung and Freud (in that order—which again brings up the knotty problem of conservative ideology, though of a kind historically different from that castigated by Rahv). Jung's archetypes, collective unconscious, and *anima mundi* derived from a tradition of German idealism which had its progressivist as well as its reactionary exponents. But it is not necessary to make a brief either for Jung's politics—which were disgusting—or for his work in psychoanalysis—much of which has been called into question—in order to acknowledge the usefulness of his notion of archetypes in mapping that shadowy territory that marks the intersection of myth, dream, and folktale. By emphasizing the universal and unchanging elements in myth and symbol, Jung bequeathed a method which, if not very helpful in studying the local peculiarities taken on by a mythical motif as it appears at any particular place and time, was effective in classifying huge masses of data, with their amazing recurrences and regularities.

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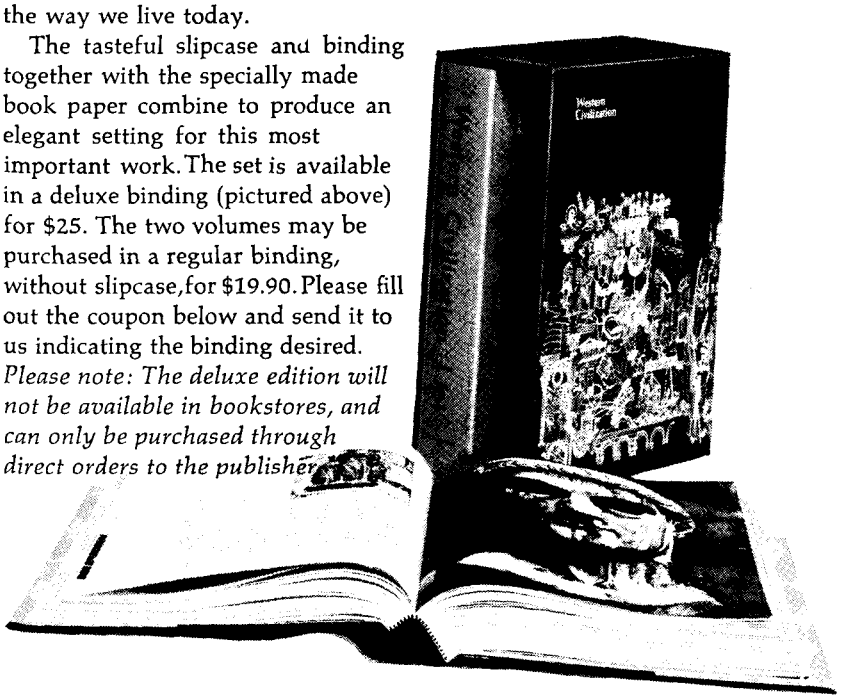

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Campbell's *Masks of God* leaves this essentially taxonomic approach behind; no doctrinaire Jungian, he is willing to enlist Freud and anyone else who can elucidate the prodigious problems at hand. *The Flight of the Wild Gander*, a collection of six essays written over the last twenty-five years, exhibits the same eclecticism. Its overall theme is "that myths are a function of nature as well as of culture, and as necessary to the balanced maturation of the human psyche as is nourishment to the body."

Campbell explores the "naturalness" of myth in the essay, "The Symbol Without Meaning," by offering a speculative reconstruction of the origins of the fertility pattern, in which the round of the seasons, death, and rebirth are related to human physical and spiritual life. Using the data provided by recent excavations in the Near East, he traces the beginnings of man's near-universal intuition of the relation between himself and the natural cycle—one that is found in all "high" cultures, including our own—to the momentous period of transition sometime in the Neolithic period (about 6500 BCE), during which wandering bands of hunters and foragers became relatively settled communities practicing grain agriculture and stock breeding. The early hunting communities, according to Campbell, had been composed of persons each of whom was "equivalent," in that he possessed in himself the entire inventory of skills and lore that the group possessed. Agriculture and husbandry brought social differentiation, and an accompanying shift to the fertility pattern:

> The problem of existing as a mere fraction instead of a whole imposes certain stresses on the psyche which no primitive hunter ever had to endure, and consequently the symbols giving structure and support to the development of the primitive hunter's psychological balance were radically different from those that arose in the settled villages ... and which have been inherited from that age and continued into the present by all the high civilizations of the world.

The middle Neolithic age, which produced the earliest forms of the cult of fertility and represented its new world view in such geometrical forms as the "mandala" on its pottery, gave way to a period marked by the prominence of what Campbell calls "hieratic city states," in which the social community is conceived of as modeled upon the heavenly original, thus mediating between the human and the divine. The "cosmological conviction," as it has been called, that grew up in these city states lasted until the Renaissance, when it began to be supplanted by the humanistic outlook characteristic of the modern world. The god at the heart of the geometrical maze on the mandala was now replaced by man.

How is it that the mythological pattern of death and rebirth based on the changing of the seasons which arose at the time of the shift in social organization from hunting to farming appears and reappears in generation after generation? Campbell locates the persistence of the myth in what Jung called the "collective unconscious," and, be it noted, in what Freud called the "memory traces" of the "mass psyche." Here is where many will refuse to go along. The notion of the collective unconscious is unsatisfactory because it is unfalsifiable (unless of course archeology should come up with, say, geometrical pottery that dated from millennia before the time of the great transformation)—an explanation of the *ignotum per ignotus*. But it should be understood not in positivistic terms but as an expressive, suggestive metaphor—if you will, another example (like those magical territories "ego," "id," and "superego," into which the psyche, like all Gaul, is divided) of the mythmaking power at work in our time. And as a myth it cannot be argued—only used.

ULTIMATELY, both criticism of mythography as something outworn and expendable, and the invocation of Freud to refute Jung must be judged as unsatisfactory. For Freud used myth to connect the genesis of the individual consciousness with the development of the human species well before his late, avowedly speculative phase. To discard *Totem and Taboo*, in which, in 1911, Freud tacitly assumed a collective unconscious, is to open oneself to the charge of arbitrariness, and in any case does not do justice to Freud. Perhaps we may look forward to some theorist of the future who will be able to encompass both Freud's dynamic approach and Jung's archetypes; when that day comes, we shall be closer to a more comprehensive and therefore more adequate theory of both myth and the psyche.

I should not close without calling attention to Campbell's graceful narration and analysis of various myths, notably several of those of the American Indians. His training as a literary critic and his deft writing combine in a way that all who know his earlier *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* will recall with pleasure. Campbell is one who remembers that the meaning of *mythos* is "story," and he knows a good one when he finds it. *The Flight of the Wild Gander* is an able series of "explorations in the mythological dimension" (as the subtitle puts it) and will serve as a good introduction to *The Masks of God* for all who have not discovered those volumes.

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